

# FIRE GROUND



Tasmania Fire Service

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF  
THE TASMANIA FIRE SERVICE

**MARCH 2017**

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**Latrobe Fire Brigade  
responds to major  
structural fire**

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**Bushfire  
Retrospective  
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and Emergency  
Services Conference**

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# MESSAGE

from the Chief Officer



Over the past 12 months I've been out and about visiting fire brigades around the state and I've seen first-hand how sharp we look. 2015-16 was a tough year, with the north-west bushfires and floods statewide, yet TFS and SES were equal to the task. Both services worked extremely well together when presented with challenging events, proving to me that integrated emergency services are really the only way to go.

This year's 1967 bushfire commemorative events gave me pause to reflect on just how far TFS has come since those disastrous fires fifty years ago.

Inquiries that followed those Black Tuesday fires demanded that things simply had to change and Tasmania Fire Service as we know it today was born – the only truly integrated State Fire Service in Australia.

Many of the things we learned from those fires have now become institutionalised practices. For example we have a fire permit system so we know where hazard reduction burns are being conducted.

There is no comparison between the response in 1967 and the Tasmania Fire Service of 2017. Today it's all about early detection and rapid weight of response so we attack fires early to keep them small. Our firefighting equipment is dramatically different. Beaters and trailer pumps have been replaced with a fleet of modern fire trucks – which we build ourselves. We have 460 of them around Tasmania, all fitted with the latest technology. And we now use aircraft to support ground crews.

Sophisticated technologies mean we are better able to predict weather and fire

conditions so firefighters know where to pre-position and can warn people when fires are likely to occur. We have a Fuel Reduction Program that executes strategic burns across the state, to reduce the impact of bushfire on buildings and infrastructure. I note this worked perfectly in Rossarden this summer.

We have award winning programs such as 'Bushfire Ready Neighbourhoods' working directly at the local level – helping communities help themselves when it comes to bushfire readiness and response. And of course we have our people.

5,000 career and volunteer firefighters, skilled in bushfire, working together in a coordinated way to keep the community safe from bushfire and other emergencies.

Unfortunately bushfires will always be part of our landscape and climate experts continue to warn us that this will become an even greater problem in future. In 2013 Tasmania experienced its worst bushfires since Black Tuesday – the Dunalley fires. So we know it can happen again. Thankfully things were different this time. No lives were lost; largely due to better prepared communities, and our emergency services' ability to harness technology and make good decisions.

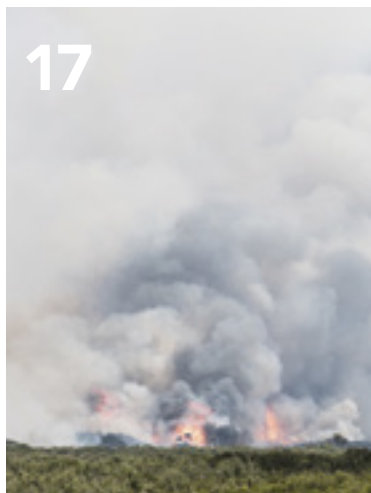
With the community's help, we can build on this resilience. Successive generations must always learn to live with fire. To know what to do.

I often remark 'If you own the property, you own the risk'. The fire service is prepared; but we need those household heroes to clear around their properties and plan with their families so we have a fighting chance of saving lives and property when fire inevitably strikes. Firefighters must continually engage with Tasmanians to ensure they too are prepared for bushfire and know exactly what to do when the time comes. These days we can steer people to our website where they can now access Community Protection Plans and develop a detailed understanding of what they need to do before, during and after a bushfire.

Our fire permit system, our fuel reduction program and our Community Protection Plans are all important tools. Our role is not only about response in times of emergency – we have to be proactive in preventing bushfire and work with the community to make risk reduction and preparedness a priority for every Tasmanian. We will always have bushfires but we never want another '67.

Stay safe. 





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Read some of the stories of those who were affected by the 1967 bushfires.

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### Tasmania Fire Service

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Cover photo: Bernard Plumpton from the Fuel Reduction Unit holding a wombat at Agfest 2016. Picture by Steve Summers, TFS Museum



# *Road crash rescue in action*

Story and photos by  
Charlie Watson,  
Leading Firefighter,  
Launceston Fire Brigade





**On 28 April 2016, A shift at Rocherlea was paged to a road crash rescue on Remount Road in Mowbray. Information given en route was that a truck had collected a power pole and the driver was still in the vehicle. As per our response guidelines, Launceston 8.1 also responded for assistance if required.**

On arrival we were confronted with a scene right out of a Leading Firefighter's assessment block. The fully laden truck and trailer had hit the pole and carried it 50 metres down the road with the pole finishing up positioned between the truck and the trailer.

Live wires were strung across the cab from front to back with one wire draped over the mirror, past the door and over the exhaust effectively trapping the driver. The live wires at the pole had ignited the plastics and rubber hoses at the truck's towing assembly causing a small fire. While this fire was only small and didn't present any immediate threat to the safety of the driver, it did complicate the rescue because of its proximity to the 200 litres of diesel spilling from the ruptured fuel tank of the truck.

TasNetworks were on scene very quickly but because of the pole's intrusion across the road, they were unable to get to the nearest isolation point. The call was made by the officers on scene to shut the power down to the grid. The driver was very calm and he complied with our instructions.

The fire at the back of the truck was extinguished with DCP extinguishers from a safe distance and a hose line charged with foam was run out as a precaution. At this point there was not much else we could do until confirmation that the power was off. We kept talking with the driver to keep him aware of what was happening. The call for the power had been made at 14.12 and at 14.20 we had confirmation that it was now off.

Unfortunately in the final 20 seconds, something at the scene changed, and the wires started to arc across the truck cab causing some very tense but spectacular moments. As soon as the power was off, we helped the driver out and started to make the rest of the scene safe. The batteries were isolated, a dam was made to prevent the fuel entering the drain and the fuel tank was plugged. The cab lining



also started to smoulder from the arcing but that was quickly extinguished.

It was a good outcome to what could have been a very serious incident. The crews involved acted in a very professional manner and kept a calm exterior which I'm sure belied what they were feeling on the inside. This kept the rest of the scene and in particular the driver calm and able to act accordingly. **FG**







# *Latrobe Fire* *responds to major structural*



*Story and photos by  
Michael Clarke  
Second Officer  
Latrobe Fire Brigade*







# Brigade fire

**'Twas the night before Christmas, and all through the house, not a creature was stirring, except for ... The pager!**

**At 8.59 on Christmas Eve 2015 we were paged out to what was to become one of the most significant structure fires the North West Coast has seen in many years. The iconic business of Reliquaire in Latrobe was well alight before crews even had a chance to respond.**

Reliquaire was an antique and specialty store, one of those must visit places for locals and tourists alike. They had an absolutely incredible array of items covering three co-joined shops, with 28 separate rooms and many different themes. Truly something for everybody. The owners had started the day by opening up the store and preparing for an expected huge day of trading as was usually the case just before Christmas. Many of the displays were powered items such as antique lamps and because there were so many of them, it had become easier at the end of the day to just switch everything off at the main switchboard instead of unplugging everything individually. And that was where the trouble started.

As the owner's daughter switched the power back on in the morning there was an explosion at the switchboard which electrocuted the young lady. The owner subsequently called for an ambulance

and dragged his daughter outside but unbeknown to him the massive power surge had started a fire in the eastern end of the store.

A short time after the local ambulance crew had arrived the fire had quickly taken hold and was gaining pace. By the time TFS was notified it was well ablaze. Latrobe crews first arriving at the scene were greeted with large plumes of black smoke and a very intense fire. The speed and ferocity with which this fire burnt was amazing.

Back up crews from Devonport and Port Sorell were quickly on the way as per the three brigade response to structure fires. As the career crew from Devonport 1.1 became mobile they could see the smoke from several kilometres away and immediately put in a request for the snorkel to come from Launceston.

And as Murphy's law would have it, 17 minutes after the call to Reliquaire we were called out to another structure fire

in Latrobe. A quick shuffle of crews saw that job quickly responded to and sorted out - thankfully it was a relatively minor fire which freed up those crews to return to Reliquaire.

Another major consideration was traffic control and keeping several hundred bystanders back far enough.

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**The job had drawn a very large crowd right on opening time on the busiest day of trading in town.**

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On a positive note, a few days after the fire we were able to gather some footage and photos for training purposes from several people in the crowd who were there filming before we had arrived.

At the height of the fire we had 12 pieces of fire apparatus, the BA support van from Launceston, four support vehicles, approximately 40 firefighters, the regional Fire Investigator, two District Officers and the Regional Chief in attendance. Police and Ambulance Tasmania were also in attendance with several of their own crews.

Due to the size of the building and spread of the fire, operations were divided into sectors with one large BA fresh air base and a centralised staging area for incoming crews. Rehab was a major consideration for all personnel on scene due to the sweltering weather conditions

coupled with the heavy workload especially for the BA operators.

Several operators went through six BA cylinders with the majority managing around four wearings. The fresh air base was stocked with all the spare sets and cylinders we could muster from along the coast as well as supplies delivered by the BA support van from Launceston. A quick count at the end of the day revealed eleven and a half pages filled out on the BA control board. We also had an Ambulance Paramedic stationed at the fresh air base to monitor crews between cylinder changes.

By midday we had the upper hand on the fire and had seen two major structural collapses of the two storey section of the store. The adjoining café was our major exposure and firefighting efforts were focused on that during the earlier stages of the fire. Unfortunately it sustained a large amount of damage at the rear of the building and within the roof space but was still standing and would be able to reopen at a later stage.

By 4.00pm planning was underway by the local council and consultant structural engineers as to the best way to demolish the remaining façadewhich posed a significant risk of collapse and was hindering the mop up process. It was eventually brought down by a large excavator and the site was handed back to the owners around 7.30pm. A very long and arduous day for all involved.

The generosity of the local businesses must also be mentioned for the support they offered with food, drinks and ice as well as the use of toilet facilities.

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**Many hazards were encountered during the day including falling powerlines, extreme heat, structural collapse and many trip hazards.**

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The Reject Shop was directly across the road from the fresh air base and from there we requested several outdoor chairs and every bottle of Powerade they had in the store! These businesses could simply not do enough to help us.

By the end of the day we had three firefighters who received treatment at hospital, one with burns to his hands, one with a badly sprained ankle and one suffering from heat exhaustion.

We had the opportunity to trial CAFS for part of the mop up phase which seemed to work pretty well. It was pleasing to stand back at times during the day and watch the outstanding work being carried out by both career and volunteer crews. The seamless integration worked well



due to our many hours of training and the combined exercises we have conducted over the years.

Although the losses were bad it was a truly a massive effort put in by those on scene and many lessons were learnt for future large structure fires.

Conservative estimates of loss were put at \$4 million and Latrobe was left with a large hole in its street scape. The young lady who was electrocuted received some nasty burns but has recovered.

Altogether it was a devastating blow for the owners and Latrobe as a whole, but for those involved in the fight it was a great example of teamwork and how training and pre-incident planning certainly pays off. **FG**

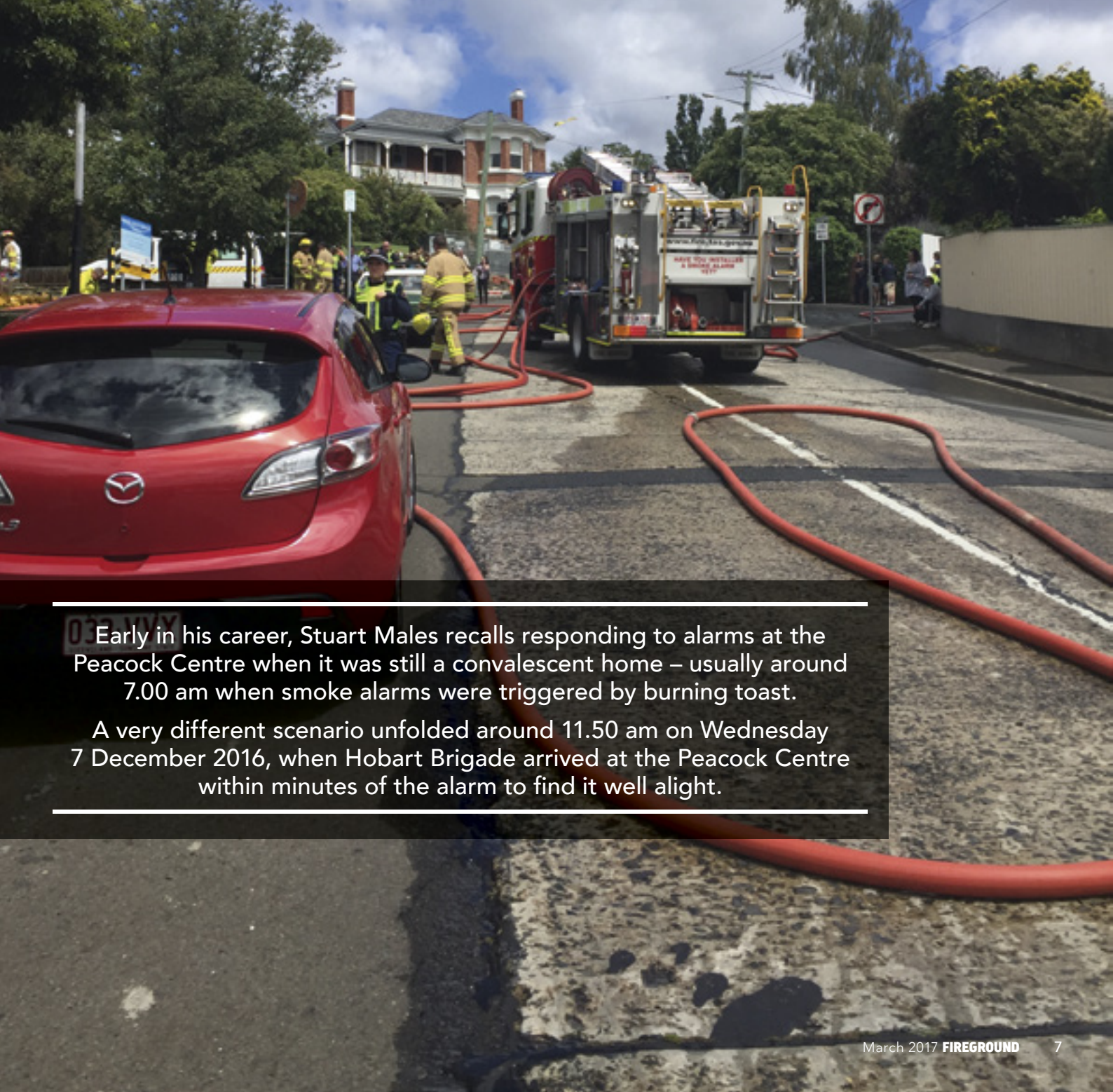
**UPDATE:** The Christie family, owners of Reliquaire, have since opened a pop up shop while they work towards opening a more permanent store in Latrobe.



# ***Hobart Brigade quick response to fire in historic Peacock Centre***

*Story – Fireground interview with Stuart Males,  
District Officer Operations Hobart Brigade*

*Photos – Emma McGrath, Media Liaison Officer DPFEM*



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Early in his career, Stuart Males recalls responding to alarms at the Peacock Centre when it was still a convalescent home – usually around 7.00 am when smoke alarms were triggered by burning toast.

A very different scenario unfolded around 11.50 am on Wednesday 7 December 2016, when Hobart Brigade arrived at the Peacock Centre within minutes of the alarm to find it well alight.

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*Hobart Brigade Firefighter Shayne Mundy*

"When the crews first arrived the central foyer was engulfed in flames and that made it difficult for them to enter and conduct their search", Stuart said.

"The age of the building was a factor in the spread of the fire, as there was little to no fire separation in the roof space allowing for rapid lateral spread through the wooden ceiling beams and rafters. As the timber work was supporting a heavy tiled roof, an eventual collapse was imminent making it risky to send firefighters into the building".

Stuart said that mild weather on the day was a factor in the Brigade's ability to contain the fire and prevent it spreading to neighbouring residential buildings.

"Having two access points (Elphinstone Road and Swan Street) was an advantage but the building was on several levels between the two roads – two levels in the original 1900s building on the Swan Street side and the 1970s addition on the Elphinstone Road side - and that was a complicating factor.

"When the crews arrived it was unclear whether there were still people inside the building and the initial focus was on possible rescue. It took about half an hour to be sure that the building was completely unoccupied and all people accounted for".

Overall, the Operations Officer applied what might be termed a 'textbook' response, undertaking his initial size up then moving through the stages of rescue, protecting exposures, containing the fire, extinguishing and then overhaul to ensure the fire was completely out.

"The operation had great support behind the scenes with food and water supplies for the crews, resource requests being actioned as well as support staff providing breathing apparatus maintenance and cylinder recharging. The team working from Hobart Station was able to recall off-duty crew to maintain Hobart's operational capability as well as ensure everyone at the Peacock Centre had a chance to rest and re-hydrate –

important given it was a pretty warm day and the workload on the firefighters was quite intense".

Stuart also said that the cooperation between emergency service responders was excellent, with Police, Fire and Ambulance officers working seamlessly together.

"In a place like Hobart you tend to get to know your counterparts in the other services so when a major incident occurs you don't have to spend time working out who's who and how you will work together. That's a big advantage over larger jurisdictions interstate".

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**Attending the incident and speaking with the management and staff of the centre also brought home to Stuart the impact that fires can have on people who don't have an emergency services background.**

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"As firefighters you know your role and what needs to be achieved to complete the job. It's easy to forget how traumatic a fire event can be for the 'civilians' at the scene.

"Some of the staff at the Peacock Centre had been relocated there only recently after a fire at their Glenorchy office. Others were affected by not knowing if their personal belongings would be OK - especially with only a few weeks to Christmas.

"It was good to be able to give people some peace of mind by retrieving bags and the like, as well as items like spectacles and car keys. The crews did a fantastic job to coordinate and retrieve those personal possessions for those staff members on what was a very traumatic day. They even managed to retrieve a family heirloom – a guitar that belonged to a staff member's





*Hobart Brigade Firefighters David McCambridge and Mitchell Grace take a breather*

father who had been in a successful band in the 1960s”.

The Minister for Health, Hon Michael Ferguson MHA, and the Tasmanian Health Service commended emergency services for their efforts.

The original Peacock building, facing onto Swan Street in North Hobart, was built in 1912 as the home of jam factory owner W.D Peacock. His descendants bequeathed the building to the state government in 1921. The building then officially opened in 1943 as a convalescent centre for women.

In more recent years the Peacock Centre has been used as a day centre for mental health clients and a base for staff visiting clients in the community.

The fire at the Centre caused an estimated \$2 million damage and Police have charged a man with arson and attempted murder. **FG**



*Hobart Brigade Firefighter Nick Enright surveys the aftermath*





# 2015/2016 Trench Rescue Courses

Story by Mark O'Donnell  
Station Officer,  
Hobart Fire Brigade





Tasmania Fire Service (TFS) has for some time been the response management authority for trench incidents involving the rescue of people from an existing trench, one under construction or where the trench or opening has collapsed due to no or poor shoring.

A review of our capabilities - both physical and human - found there was a significant gap in terms of meeting our obligations as detailed in the Tasmanian Emergency Management Plan (TEMP).


To deal with this gap, a group of operational firefighters was selected from the three regions, to enhance the TFS response capability and develop new learning materials to be delivered in a new format and course.

TFS also sent four staff to participate in the Melbourne Metropolitan Fire Brigade trench rescue course over five days to bring our core group of trainers up to the national level. Once back in Tasmania the group set about developing new training materials, identifying existing and future equipment and future response procedures.

As a result, in the last 12 months (2015-16) TFS has successfully completed two courses of trench rescue training. The first course was an instructor development program where six new trainers were passed through the new trench rescue training course. This was conducted in November 2015.

The next step was to deliver training to shift personnel across the State. These sessions culminated in November 2016 where around 40 firefighters attended the TAFE Tasmania Claremont Campus – School of Plumbing facility to undertake a two-day practical component that aims to consolidate the knowledge gained in the theory-based on-shift training.

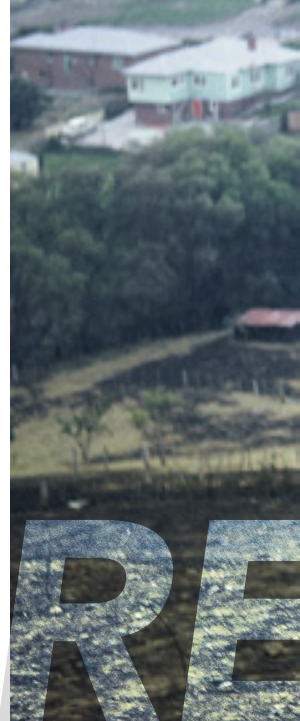
The facility used by TFS to conduct the practical training is purpose-built and TAFE has been very supportive of TFS, allowing us to use their all-weather facility as well as classrooms.

Over the two day course participants were taken through the equipment and construction methods used to construct safety systems in and around trench or ground works for emergency service personnel to safely work in. Course instructors tasked candidates with various challenges and a variety of roles with differing responsibilities, designed to give them a total experience of what they might experience at a 'live' trench rescue. 



*Special thanks goes to TAFE Tasmania Claremont Campus for their support and use of their training facility. Also to District Officer Mark Dobson for his support and drive for continuous improvement and to Maree Hinton from Operational Training for her specialist advice in meeting our obligations set down by the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) and also countless hours of formatting learning materials. Lastly but by no means least, thanks to the course instructors who did a fantastic job in bringing each of the four practical courses to a successful conclusion.*





# RETROSPECT 1967-20

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2017 marks 50 years since Tasmania's worst bushfire disaster – Black Tuesday, 7 February 1967, a day of catastrophic conditions when more than 100 separate fires raged across the south-east of the State from Bicheno to Southport.

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In the space of a single day the fires burned approximately 265,000 hectares, left 64 people dead and 900 injured. Thousands of people lost their homes and possessions; public infrastructure was destroyed, livestock killed and many small towns virtually obliterated. Schools, hotels, post offices, churches and halls were destroyed.

Tasmania's emergency services at the time were poorly equipped to face the fires that swept through the region's rural and urban areas. Fire services were not integrated and equipment for rural areas was basic – axes, knapsacks, beaters and first aid kits. As the fires raged, communications became almost non-existent, water was scarce at best and people responded to the dangers as best they could.

Emergency service workers went beyond the call of duty that day to serve their community. At the same time they often did not know whether their own properties and families were safe.

The boards of enquiry that followed the tragic events of Black Tuesday identified that the administration and structure of Tasmania's existing fire brigades, and communication between them, had to change.



The Lachlan Fire Brigade's article is a reflection of how the community responded on Black Tuesday.



Lachlan brigade: from left Peter Felmingham, Les Hornsey, David Gleeson and Phil Pyke

# Brigade members recall 1967 Bushfires

Story by Phil Pyke, Second Officer, Lachlan Fire Brigade

Over the back of Mount Wellington (kunanyi) is a small brigade with the motto "Protecting Hobart's Backside Since 1983".

Although this is more of a tongue-in-cheek motto, the members of Lachlan Fire Brigade fully comprehend the risk facing Hobart should a fire escape from the Lachlan Valley.

In the year of the 50th anniversary of the 1967 Bushfires, Lachlan Brigade has four members who went through the fires that devastated Southern Tasmania.

Former Brigade Chief David Gleeson was 19 years old at the time. He saw fires tear through the Lachlan Valley, lying on a gravel road at one stage to survive.

"As the fire came through I lay on the road trying to breathe," Dave said.

"The fire was very scary and I have never seen anything like it since."

The fires destroyed much of the small fruit farms including pickers' huts which were dotted across the valley. However, Dave's family home had a lucky escape when the winds changed, leaving a burnt fence and scorched wall.

When Dave and his father returned to the house where his family had evacuated to, the woman who owned the property believed they were dead. On seeing them come through the gate, she collapsed and died of a heart attack.

Dave recalls it being a wet year in the lead-up to the fire season with much growth – the grass still green in that February.

Fire fighter Les Hornsey was 10 years old and living with his family at Wayatinah.

"We were on school holidays when the fires came and the bulldozers ringed the town with a fire break," said Les.

"The Hydro came around as a first indicator and laid out all the hoses along the streets beside the hydrants. We were told to prepare to go to the caravan park for evacuation."

"I was scared as there was a lot of smoke around but the town was well prepared unlike other towns such as Osterly and Ouse.

"In reality we were reasonably safe but afterwards Dad was away fixing the power-lines and poles."

Fourth Officer Peter Felmingham was eight years old and a Grade Three student at Glenorchy Primary when the fires came over the hills behind the suburbs.

"The earliest thing I remember happening was ash coming in. It was falling on our books and I was trying to brush it off but it left a mark."

"The smoke came and I can never forget the sun which was orange. There were paddocks opposite the school with horses in them – they all were killed by the fire."

The Primary School was evacuated but for some reason Peter found himself walking home up Chapel Street before being located by a neighbour.

Peter's father was fighting the fire with some other men in Brent Street in a paddock with long dry grass. A wind change saw them running for their lives, one man not so lucky to survive.

Second Officer Phil Pyke was nearly three years of age and sat with his mother and sister on the back porch of their home at Kingston as the fire raced through. His father was in Buckland training with the Army Reserve.

Despite his age, he remembers vividly as day turned to night with flames tearing through the apple packing sheds.

"My grandfather had just left us and walked across the paddock with his dog, disappearing as flames raced across the grass. He was later found to be okay."

"As I was so young, I wasn't aware of how bad the situation was. It was after the 2009 Victorian bushfires when I asked my mother what would she have done if our house had caught fire that day.

"She said she was going to grab my sister and I and run to the dam – some 400m away. When I said to her that we wouldn't have made it, she just cried. 2009 bought some bad memories back for her."

There will be many memories for those who went through the tragedy and horror of the '67 fires. However, for the members of Lachlan and no doubt many other brigades, the equipment, vehicles and training we have today evolved out of the aftermath of 1967.

Whatever future bushfire seasons bring, this small brigade will continue to take its motto seriously in continuing to protect Hobart's backside.



# '67 Bushfires Story Project

Story by Lesley King, Community Development Officer,  
Community Development and Education

The horror of the '67 fires still haunts people today, and is captured in the Community Fire Safety Unit's '67 Bushfires Story Project in the article by Lesley King, TFS Community Development Officer.

The '67 Bushfires Story project started in late 2015 to collect people's stories with a video booth. Starting at the Taste Festival that year in Hobart, the booth was taken around Tasmania to various events and venues collecting video stories from people who experienced that catastrophic day.

The project is part of TFS Bushfire Ready Neighbourhoods Program, Community Fire Safety, to raise awareness and engage people in bushfire preparedness.

Alan Gifford recalls that 'the morning's weather was sinister'. And Andrew Weidmann adds that it was 'a superhot day by lunch time, the sky was vivid red'. Former Snug Primary School students recall that the 'the sky became dark red and the sun became dim, breathing was difficult and we were told to get under our desks and wait'.

Harley Stanton shares his experience – 'ash was flying horizontally through the air with a blizzard of fire and trees exploded'.

Michael Swanton in Lenah Valley recalls 'I looked up to see a fireball 30 metres long and in a microsecond it moved across hilltops'.



Accounts of the Black Tuesday fires include fighting the fires, close escapes, tragedy for some and surviving the

day – but also the process of recovery, of rebuilding and emergency relief and support from the rest of the country and overseas.

Of course, the 1967 fires were not the first significant bushfire event in Tasmania. Since colonial times, Tasmania has experienced bushfire events which have left a trail of death and destruction. That's one of the issues of being part of Southeast Australia, one of the most bushfire-prone areas on the planet.

## Could Tasmania experience another catastrophic fire event like Black Tuesday?

Story by Margot Dawson,  
Fireground Editor

The answer is 'yes' – and it happened in January 2013 when fires swept across several parts of Tasmania, the most damage being in the Dunalley, Boomer Bay, Murdunna, Eaglehawk Neck, Taranna, Copping and Connellys Marsh area where 193 homes and other infrastructure were destroyed including the Dunalley school. The Bicheno fire burned bushland and parks with around 19 homes and other structures destroyed. The Lake Repulse fire burned bushland, primary production and agricultural areas. In Fireground Spring 2015 edition, retiring Chief Officer

Mike Brown reflected on the 2013 fires and how TFS responded.

"When the bad weather came on 3 January 2013 we were ready for it. There were 40 fires all up on 3 January, and the following day was even worse. That was a really bad day, catastrophic conditions by lunchtime.

"That was the worst fire weather we had had since Black Tuesday in 1967. In some ways it was worse, because of the lightning and the hot fiery day the day before. For all of us, it was a once-in-a-career event.

"The thing that was in the back of my mind was, 'This is only 4 January, and we still have more than six weeks of fire season to go'. If the fire at Molesworth (in February 2013) had started at the same time we could have lost half of Hobart".

Mike credited TFS Operational Priorities with helping to ensure no civilians lost their lives during the fire. The Priorities were developed after the 2009 Victorian bushfires, which highlighted the need for clear and unambiguous operational

priorities to guide actions in extreme fire conditions.

"We developed our six principles for when fires burn out of control and cannot be stopped – the fires that turn normal firefighting principles on their head. Those principles are: issue warnings, protect vulnerable people, protect valuable community assets, stop building to building ignition, protect other community assets, then when conditions moderate, actively fight the fire when safe to do so."

Mike said that crew members coming out of Dunalley were saying that communications were difficult, the situation was confusing and people were scared, but the priorities gave them confidence, they knew what they needed to do.

The 2013 fires showed that catastrophic conditions – such as were experienced on Black Tuesday – can and will happen again. The response to the 2013 fires shows the extent of changes in emergency services capacity and expertise since 1967.



In the face of these challenges, emergency services have to work together. Inter-agency collaboration is the key to meeting the challenges of the future.



Photo credit: Warren Frey

Tasmania Fire Service as it is today evolved out of the 1967 bushfires, and the changes in emergency services response from 1967 to the present day have been massive - there is no comparison between the response available in 1967 and the professional, integrated Tasmania Fire Service of 2017:


- Improvements in firefighting equipment and approaches – including foams and retardants, personal protective equipment, a fire permit and registration system and Tasmanian built appliances
- Sophisticated technology for fire weather predictions through the Bureau of Meteorology, which aids in preparation for adverse weather conditions and enables more accurate declarations of fire permit periods and total fire ban days
- The ability to draw on national and international support and resources when needed, including the national aerial firefighting fleet
- The successful introduction of innovative programs such as Community Fire Safety education; Bushfire Ready Neighbourhoods; and the Fuel Reduction Unit's work all assist in risk mitigation and preparedness
- TFS is an integrated service across urban and rural areas, and is part of an integrated emergency response process across Government, including the SES and Police as well as the Parks and Wildlife Service and Forestry Tasmania. In particular, TFS, Parks and Wildlife and Forestry Tasmania operate under an Inter-Agency Fire Management Protocol which includes special arrangements for days where fire risk is deemed likely to be high to extreme.



Photo credit: Warren Frey

But as Chief Officer Chris Arnol emphasises, there is no room for complacency for new challenges lie ahead, with climate change and increasing urban/rural interface risk of particular concern.

"We are experiencing unusual events in emergency management across the board, with lightning ignitions that are causing bushfires that we weren't necessarily getting 20 to 30 years ago. At the other end of the spectrum, floods and storms are also increasingly impacting on communities", Chris said.

"In the face of these challenges, emergency services have to work together. Inter-agency collaboration is the key to meeting the challenges of the future". 



# 2015-16 BUSHFIRE SEASON

## RETROSPECTIVE

*Story – Phil Smith, Senior Station Officer*

### **Summary**

The 2015-16 season from October 2015 – March 2016 elicited a response and commitment unprecedented in the history of Tasmania's fire agencies.

The campaign was a study in contrasts – from high tech aerial support to remote area crews using basic equipment like rake hoes, axes, chainsaws and portable pumps.

Career and volunteer brigades from all across Tasmania, together with Forestry Tasmania and Parks and Wildlife crews, worked with interstate and overseas personnel on the fireground.

As Deputy Chief Officer Gavin Freeman said, it was the largest deployment of interstate firefighters and aerial firefighting support in Australia.

And it proved that lightning really does strike twice!

### **Spring 2015 – where it all began..**

To understand how the 2015-16 bushfire season came about, we need to go back to the spring of 2015. The majority of the State had either the lowest or very much below average spring rainfalls recorded for the previous ten years.

Spring temperatures were also the highest on record for almost the whole State, and the start of summer 2015 saw higher than average temperatures Statewide.

The 2015-16 bushfire season started early, with total fire bans declared on 2 October 2015 and again on 5 October in the South and North. A total fire ban was declared for the south of the state on Christmas Day 2015, making our A/Chief Officer rather unpopular among holiday campers.

In typical Tasmanian style, just two weeks before this we had record levels of snow in most parts of the state, closing schools, roads and even the Midland Highway.

The first major fire of the 2015-2016 campaign was an escaped burn onto Parks and Wildlife land at Cameron's Inlet in early October. Flinders Island TFS crews with the local parks rangers were able to contain the fire and stop it spreading along the coast into the Lady Baron township. This 5,000 hectare fire continued to burn until March 2016.

By 12 January 2016, the bushfire season was well underway with 14 active fires burning within the State. The following day, a weather front resulted in 1,000 dry lightning strikes hitting landfall, mainly across the North West, West Coast and in inaccessible areas of the Wilderness World Heritage Area through Cradle Mountain/Lake St.Claire and the Central Plateau.

On 15 January 2016, two days after the first lightning event, we were aware of 80 fires with 15 at advice level and one at watch and act. These included three deliberately lit fires which were threatening homes and infrastructure at Nunamara, just outside Launceston.

Over 20 fires were identified in the lower Mersey/Central Plateau area and over 40 more stretched down the North West of the state.





## TIMELINE

23

Jan

interstate/  
international  
deployments

Oct-Dec 2015

Pre-emptive  
arrangements  
in place

13

Jan

initial lightning event  
(standard response)

19

Jan

Acting Chief Officer  
discussions re  
interstate support

24

Jan

Interstate/  
International  
Liaison Unit  
established in  
Tasmania

28

Jan

second  
lightning event

They say lightning doesn't strike twice.... but on 28 January 2016 up to 1,800 dry lightning strikes were recorded in another weather event that swept across the state. The following day, on 29 January, we were aware of 90 fires, however many more were not able to be assessed. By this time also, several of the initial fires caused by lightning ignitions had joined up.

A few days after the first lightning event, realising it would be a long drawn out campaign, our A/Chief Officer made arrangements for interstate support and by 20 January 2016, just seven days after the first lightning event, the first interstate personnel had arrived in Tasmania in the form of interstate liaison officers.

On 15 January and again on 26 January 2016, the State Response Controller of Victoria issued warnings to Victorians about smoke from the bushfires spreading across the east of the state. Reports of smoke were coming from areas as far away as the eastern suburbs of Melbourne and north-eastern Victoria.

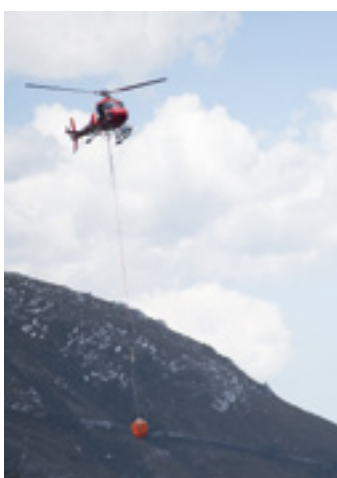
### Bring on the cavalry!

Over the next three months, the campaign saw over 2,000 interstate changeovers from over 1,000 personnel in firefighting capacity, IMT roles and Air Attack Supervisors to name a few. This influx also saw 152 interstate vehicles transported to Tasmania and two major base camps mobilised from Victoria and NSW.

Our local contingent consisted of:

- over 1,100 TFS and SES members most of whom were involved for the entire campaign
- 220 Parks and Wildlife Service Personnel
- 152 FT personnel and 71 contractors
- over 600 contractors
- many, many more local civilian volunteers.

TFS and SES volunteers left partners, families, their work and their businesses to go and fight the fires during the protracted campaign. It was a remarkable contribution, and is typical of the commitment of our volunteers.



### Help from the skies –

47 different aircraft were involved in the campaign overall:

- 4 air tractors
- 9 Huey helicopters
- 2 Sikorsky helicopters
- 1 very large air tanker
- 2 large air tankers.

This represented a total of around 118,000 litres of water per drop – or in perspective, 40 Heavy Tankers, 70 Urban Pumpers, 90 medium tankers or 236 light tanker loads.

NSW Rural Fire Service contracted a very large air tanker to us - the Southern Belle. This DC-10 Bomber has a wingspan of 55 metres and is 55 metres long. It has the capacity to drop 44,000 litres of either suppressant or retardant. After each drop, the aircraft had to return to Avalon to refill.

Another impressive addition to the air arsenal in 2016 was the Hercules C-130 Bomber, called Thor. This aircraft has a 40 metre wingspan and is 30 metres long, and can carry over 15,000 litres of suppressant or retardant. It was based at Launceston Airport and used during the fire season.

Because of their size and working proximity to the ground, both the Southern Belle and Thor required smaller spotter aircraft to fly in front of them and lead them into and across the drop zone.



### Back to basics...

Due to the isolation of the majority of these fires, a lot of the work was carried out by remote area crews either 'dry' firefighting by using rake hoes, axes and chainsaws to create mineral earth breaks to stop the spread of fire or with portable water dams and bladders and portable pumps, blackening out the fire edge. As an example, the Mersey Forest Fire had a perimeter of approximately 230kms, and the majority was blackened out and mapped on foot by remote area crews.

Two base camps were established to support these firefighting efforts, one at Stanley and the other at Mole Creek.

13 container loads of cargo were sent by air and sea to Stanley, including among other things, two dozen showers, two dozen toilets, a laundry, commercial kitchen, industrial floodlights along with 500 tents, pillows and bedding.

To feed the hungry hoards at Stanley Base Camp, commercial caterers were called in to supply 900 meals a day. Making up those 900 meals included:

- 100 litres of milk
- 720 eggs
- 35kg of bacon
- 150kg of meat for the lunch rolls
- 800 pieces of fruit
- 2000 snack bars



**14****Feb**

third lightning event

**14****Feb**

Mole Creek Base Camp established

**10****March**interstate/  
international assistance ceased**16****Feb**

Stanley Base Camp established

- 600 cups of coffee
- 50 litres of orange juice
- 300 serves of dessert.

This was each and every day...

190kms away, a smaller but just as impressive set up was being run at Mole Creek Football Ground to accommodate 150 people. This Base Camp was owned by NSW Rural Fire Service.

The five RFS shipping containers sent to Tasmania contained 26 tonnes of equipment including amongst lots of other things shelters, tents, electrical equipment, tools, lighting, camp stretchers, bedding and eskys. The basecamp arrived on the 13th February, and was fully operational the following day.

### All up...

First and foremost – there were no fatalities or serious injuries. Protecting life is the key priority for TFS.

The firefighting effort was one of the most protracted and difficult in TFS history – over 60 continuous days of campaign.

Throughout the 2015-2016 fire season, over 143,500 hectares were burnt resulting in over 1600kms of fire edge - the equivalent of the drive from Melbourne to Brisbane.

The total cost of the 2015-16 bushfire emergency was approximately \$55 million across the three agencies (TFS/SES, FT and PWS).

There was limited damage to infrastructure. With Tasmania already in an energy crisis due to the prolonged dry conditions, protecting infrastructure such as the Strathgordon power station was important.

Some Aboriginal and historic heritage areas were impacted.

20,125 hectares (1.27%) of the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area was affected – but the fires impacted on less than 1,500 hectares of threatened and sensitive vegetation.

### What we learned:

As Deputy Chief Officer Gavin Freeman said, TFS is committed to learning from experience as well as recognising what we did well.

An internal Review of Operations was initiated by TFS, Forestry Tasmania (FT) and Parks and Wildlife Service (PWS) to ensure ongoing improvement in emergency management. This review wanted to identify, communicate and action the operational lessons learned.

Importantly, the Review sought to capture experiences and comments from volunteers, Incident Management Teams, State Fire Operations Centre personnel, interstate personnel and functional support areas. This information was obtained through surveys and debriefs conducted by the Review team.


The Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC) was asked to undertake an industry peer review of the management of the fires.

The Reviews identified common themes:

- Preparedness
- Review State and Incident Management arrangements
- Capacity and capability
- Planning and Incident Action Plans
- Resourcing and resource tracking
- Communications
- Air operations
- Safety
- Interoperability
- Local knowledge
- Communications systems and information technology
- Finance.

Some of the specific findings:

- Opportunities to develop volunteers in additional roles specific to tasks and skills were identified (including staging area management, air base management, remote area firefighting)
- Consider the introduction of a winch capability for remote area firefighting skills
- Conduct a gap analysis and skills audit to determine where SES and TFS workforce can share common skills to assist each other in an all-hazards approach
- Ensure and maintain a consistent approach to resource tracking across the State (personnel, machinery, small equipment, aircraft)
- Opportunities to improve communication between local, regional and State levels were identified.
- Develop standardised reporting systems for Hazard and Accident reports across fire agencies and a common approach to the hazards of working around tall trees, hazardous timber environment and unfamiliar vegetation types
- Embed local knowledge by integrating interstate Incident Management Teams with local Emergency Services, community and stakeholders
- Use technology to disseminate current Incident Action Plans and plans to the incident ground, and improve sharing of common information with government and non-government agencies alike.

'Overall, we think that the way in which the fires were managed is a tribute to the Tasmanian fire agencies, their leadership and all personnel involved in this incident. We also recognise the very significant effort of interstate and international fire agencies that came to Tasmania's aid in circumstances that the State could not hope to manage effectively by itself'. (AFAC Review Panel) 





# Collaboration the key in CAFS Workshop

Story by Raz Stow (Brigade Chief, Dilston Brigade)  
and Mathew Philpott (First Officer, Bridgewater Brigade)

Since 2013, Tasmania Fire Service has made a significant investment in Compressed Air Foam System (CAFS) technology, initially with the specialised CAFS appliance, and more recently with the incorporation of the capability into a number of heavy pumpers, a CAFS Prototype medium tanker and most visibly, the frontline CAFS heavy tankers.

With 15 CAFS enabled heavy tanker appliances now operational state-wide, and having two fire seasons in which the capability has been tested (in addition to the CAFS 4.1 and 8.1 programs), a user group and key stakeholder workshop was held at Campbell Town Fire Station in November, 2016.

The focus of the workshop was to consolidate and share the experiences gained so far, and to record the information with a view to help guide future organisational direction in terms of CAFS training, operability and integration.

Participants were encouraged to discuss experiences to date, recognising that within the groups, there were vastly different levels of brigade involvement and progression that have shaped their perceptions on CAFS operational effectiveness.

The impact that the use of CAFS, and indeed Class A foam use in general, has had on the varying environments TFS operates in was a major topic of discussion, especially in terms of public and TFS brigades' perceptions when foam concentrates are utilised in CAF, and the more traditional Nozzle Aspirated Foam (NAF) formats.

In recognition of this, the workshop invited John Gorrie PhD, a Senior Environmental Officer with the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) to speak to the participants on the use of foams during firefighting operations in Tasmania, and on the EPA's collaborative journey with TFS during the development of CAFS capability. John has been instrumental in the TFS integration of CAFS in appliances and operations, and speaks highly of the forward thinking organisational approach that has been taken. John has contributed to this edition of *Fireground* (Page 21) and his article makes for educational reading.

At time of the writing of this article (early December 2016) the data and information gathered from the workshop was still



being examined and analysed. One clear positive result however was the collaborative nature of the discussions held, both between the user group and senior TFS staff also present on the day. The benefits really showed where rank and positional boundaries were cast aside to further position whole of organisation outcomes.

Sincere thanks go to DCO Gavin Freeman for sponsoring and opening the day, with valued support also given by DOs Ian Cawthorn, John Hazzlewood and Mark Klop, Leon Smith, John Gorrie and FWO/SO Steve Townsend. Furthermore a note of appreciation should be shown to the officers and members of Campbell Town Fire Brigade, as we invaded their facilities for the day.

SES was also instrumental in feeding the troops, however the biggest note of appreciation should go the members of Bicheno, Bridgewater, Cambridge, Carrick, Dilston, Dodges Ferry, Legana, Prospect, Ulverstone, Ridgley and St Marys Brigades for giving up their time to attend the workshop and provide valuable discussion and input.

*Update (from Fireground Editor):* Since the workshop, Leon (Alfy) Smith (Manager Strategic Projects and Engagement) has been working with brigades who currently use CAFS, to look at further training opportunities. Alfy is also developing training for future operators of CAFS 8.1 appliances, and is scoping the long term CAFS project for TFS. **FG**



# Foams:

By Dr John Gorrie,  
Senior Environmental Officer,  
Environment Protection Authority Tasmania

# Past - Present - Future

An important aspect of the 50th anniversary of the 1967 fires has been to assess where we have come from, where we are now and what is the future in regards to firefighting capability. One major improvement in capability has been the evolution of foams.

Up until the 1980s, the only foam available was protein foam. When this was produced from animal sources its odour left something to be desired. The odour and the perceived cost meant a reluctance to use the foam.

The 1980s saw the introduction of synthetic foams, predominately Class B foams based on fluorocarbon technology. The fluorine-carbon chemical bond is the strongest bond known, which makes these types of foams very effective at sealing hydrocarbon vapours and the like.

Apparently the first load of this type of foam figuratively fell off the back of a US navy ship that happened to be in Hobart at the time. The foam was nearly out of spec, was offered to TFS and used in training. A BBQ was held to strengthen US-Australian ties (and as a thank you for the foam).

During the 70s and 80s, cost was the main consideration, and there was little focus on the potential environmental impacts of foams. However this has changed recently mainly due to the use of AFFF (aqueous film forming foams) in Williamstown and Oakey airbases. These foams were perfluorinated. As noted above the fluorocarbon bond is very strong. Unfortunately, that means they don't breakdown like normal Class A foams do; they also bioaccumulate in organisms, biomagnify through food chains, and exhibit some toxicity.

Nationally, a lot of work has been undertaken to determine safe levels regarding soil and water contamination from prior AFFF use, and safe drinking water levels. Fire services around the country, including TFS, are working with other agencies, such as EPAs, to determine the appropriate response to this emerging environmental concern.

There are fluorine free alternatives for Class B foam. In fact, every commercial airport in Australia now uses fluorine free foams for any response to aircraft fires.

TFS has been very proactive in developing new systems for using foams. This is highlighted by the development of a compressed air foams system (CAFS) across the state. As noted in an earlier Fireground article, TFS and the EPA have conducted joint trials to assess the effectiveness of CAFS in tyre fires, and how to manage the wastes arising from the use of CAFS in sensitive environments.

Class A foams, while less of an issue than perfluorinated foams, still have some environmental impacts related to potential toxicity and depletion of dissolved oxygen in water ways. EPA Tasmania has been working with TFS to develop doctrine around the use of CAFS and general decision making on the fireground in relation to environmental impacts. It is important to note that in all these discussions, it is accepted by everyone that the safety of responders and the public is paramount.

However, if responders and the public are not at risk, what tools are available to assess the most appropriate response from an

environmental perspective? A tool used in marine oil response (and other areas) is Net Environmental Benefit Analysis (NEBA). NEBAs are no different to other decision making tools used on the fireground. They:

- Involve assessment of environmental impact of alternative management options;
- Need to be done in a timely manner;
- Need to be redone on an ongoing basis as more information comes to hand, or the situation changes; and
- Require an impact assessment based on source-pathway-receptor model.

The source-pathway-receptor model is simply a way of visualising that for an impact to occur (human or environmental health impact), there must be a source (hazard such as a fire with toxic runoff, or smoke), a receptor that is sensitive to that runoff/ atmospheric emission, and a pathway for the contaminant to reach the receptor. If runoff is bunded, there will probably be limited impact, if the wind is blowing away from residences or responders, there is probably limited impact.


NEBA considerations include:

- Are the emissions from the fire (smoke and runoff) likely to be particularly toxic?
- Which emissions will cause the most impact (runoff or atmospheric)?
- Does the fire need to be extinguished immediately, or even extinguished at all (is there time for a CAFS truck to be called in, will extinguishing a fire cause massive waste management problems, or more impact from runoff etc)?
- Is there time to put strategies in place to minimise, or prevent, runoff leaving the fire ground (bundung, runoff dam etc)? and
- What type of receiving system will be impacted (is the receiving environment going to rapidly dilute any contaminant etc)?

In conclusion, TFS has come a long way in the foam journey, however there is recognition that there is a need for ongoing reassessment of how foams (and CAFS capability) can be best integrated into the way TFS meets its core responsibilities in a consistent manner. An example of that was the recent CAFS forum held at Campbell Town.

It is planned that the next edition of *Fireground* will provide examples that EPA Tasmania consider best practice environmental management by TFS crews, and explain in more depth the concept of a sensitive receiving system.

*The views in this article are those of the author and not necessarily those of the EPA or TFS.*

*The author wishes to thank Gerald Crawford, Andrew Fyfe and David van Geytenbeek for sharing their experiences and views on the use of foams during their careers, and Leon (Alfy) Smith for his ongoing support for environmental consideration of the use of foams.* 



## ***“It’s more than a career, it’s a family”***

Damien Killalea retired in January 2017, after nearly 38 years with what he described as the TFS family.

Over those years, Damien worked in many parts of the organisation and many parts of the State after starting his career as a trainee firefighter.

About 19 years ago Damien suggested to the Executive Leadership Team that they consider establishing a unit focussed on community fire safety. Subsequently, Damien was given free rein to get the unit up and running.

“It was with some sadness that I left the fire operations side of the organisation 19 years ago to help build a community fire safety division. For me and I expect most firefighters, firefighting (most of my experience was in the field) was hard work, but very rewarding”, Damien said.

“And the last 19 years working with a wonderful team of people to reduce fires and their impact on vulnerable Tasmanians has also been very rewarding. The team’s results have been outstanding: the rate of fires in the business community remains very low, the house fire rate has been cut in half, and the fire fatality rate has been reduced by more than two thirds. A few years ago we ramped up our efforts around bushfire safety, and haven’t lost a civilian in a bushfire since 1983”.

Damien acknowledged the significant challenges facing TFS with an ageing population and a warming climate.

“I wish all of you who deliver our services to the community, and all who work in the background to support them, the very best for the future”.

At Damien’s farewell function, Chief Officer Chris Arnol spoke of Damien’s leadership and drive and the pride that all TFS should take in his achievements through Community Fire Safety.

“Damien helped put policy into practice and our strategic priorities around community resilience come directly from Damien’s work. That’s put TFS ahead of the pack in adopting programs that ultimately save lives.”.

Deputy Chief Officer Gavin Freeman spoke of Damien’s visionary approach to community fire safety, and his contribution to the TFS in terms of guidance and mentoring. 



*Damien’s presentation by Chief Officer Chris Arnol*



*Damien with wife Elaine at his retirement function*





# Positive change for rural communities

For several years agricultural and other machinery operations have been automatically banned during Total Fire Ban periods (TFBs). This has caused irritation and confusion among affected operators.

Following input from a committee of operators affected by the bans during TFBs, and analysis by the TFS Bushfire Planning and Policy Unit, TFS has revised the existing Total Fire Ban system, ensuring that machinery will only be banned when the fuel and weather conditions hit triggers that may result in a fire caused by such operations.

The new system will take into account variations in local conditions and will encourage machinery operators to effectively self-regulate to suspend operations when certain conditions are reached, and, importantly, allow work to recommence when conditions abate.

Many of these practices are now reflected in the Machinery Operation Guidelines. The Guidelines reflect the view that controls on operation of machinery should be based on evidence, taking into account real time measurements of the factors that affect the chance of a fire starting.

The Guideline includes a weather conditions table together with fire safety information, similar to that in the mainland grain harvesting guidelines. This will be trialled for use during the 2016-17 fire season. **FG**

Above: Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management Hon Rene Hidding MP pictured fourth from right at the launch of the new Guideline on 9 December 2016

**Machinery Operations Guideline**  
Tasmania Fire Service  
A basis for safe work in dry vegetation

This Guideline provides fire safety measures for machinery operations in or near dry vegetation, and specifies criteria for when fire weather conditions warrant stopping machinery operations. This Guideline is endorsed by Tasmania Fire Service as suitable bushfire risk mitigation practices but does not apply to forestry or mining operations.

1800 000 699  
fire.tas.gov.au

**MACHINERY OPERATIONS**  
The use of certain machinery and practices is restricted during the Fire Permit Period of a Total Fire Ban.  
When conditions warrant, Tasmania Fire Service machinery operations with an explicitly written Fire Ban declaration.

**RECOMMENDED MACHINERY OPERATING PRACTICES**  
IMPORTANT: The following practices should be adopted when using engines, vehicles or machinery in areas that are written to dry vegetation and similar conditions.

Plan

- Establish a fire prevention and emergency response strategy for staff, contractors and machinery operations.
- Be aware of potential ignition sources from the machinery being used.
- Adopt a regular maintenance program, both before and during operations, paying particular attention to wearing parts, bearings and engines.
- Aim to ensure machinery is free from faults and mechanical defects.
- Ensure combustible residues on machines are kept to a minimum, especially in areas of high fire risk, such as engines, exhausts and brakes.

Respond

- Phone 000 as soon as a fire is detected.
- In the event of a fire, and if safe to do so without causing additional fire and endangering your own life, locate the machinery to a fuel reduced area, in an attempt to prevent fire spread.
- Attempt to put the fire out.

MEASURE LOCAL WEATHER CONDITIONS

Operations Table

- Suspend operations when weather reaches the thresholds shown in the Machinery Operations Table (which relates to a Grassland Fire Danger Index of 35).

TEMP (°C)

TEMP (°C)	5	10	15	20
25	31	35	38	40
29	33	36	38	40
27	30	33	36	38
33	25	28	31	33
35	23	26	28	31
40	21	24	26	28
45	19	22	24	26

TEMP (°C) 5 10 15 20



# New light tankers




***‘We make great trucks!’***

TFS has started taking delivery of 25 new light tankers, as part of a fleet upgrade funded by the Tasmanian Government.

The locally built vehicles are part of a multi-million dollar commitment to bring online 95 new vehicles over the next four years.

A feature of the new appliances are crew safety systems for protection in the event of crew entrapment and burn-over, including a crew protection water deluge system, radiant heat shields, water level indicators and the ability to carry up to 585 litres of water.

“These state-of-the-art vehicles are fabricated by us, tailored for Tasmania’s bushfire risk”, Chief Officer Chris Arnol said.

“I think it’s really important that we continue to make these vehicles – we make great trucks”. 



*Hon Rene Hidding MP,  
Minister for Police,  
Fire and Emergency  
Management*



# Keeping Tasmania Safe:

## The TFS Fire Permit System

Story by Andrew Emery,  
Station Officer State Operations

Every year, I find myself reading media articles and fielding questions which draw comparisons to the devastating 1967 bushfires which decimated Southern Tasmania. None more so than this year which is the 50th anniversary of the disaster.

More often than not, these references to '67 are of a negative context, comparing the impending fire seasons and possible loss to what we encountered on 7 February 1967.

Acknowledging what has happened in the past is a great way to shape our future, and summer 1967 was undoubtedly the catalyst in shaping the fire service which we know today, a fire service which in many ways is the envy of fire services around the country.

In the period immediately before Tuesday 7 February 1967, the day we now refer to as "Black Tuesday", several bushfires were burning uncontrolled in Southern Tasmania. Some of these fires had been deliberately lit for burning off, despite the extremely dry conditions at the time. Reports into the causes of the fire stated that only 22 of the 110 fires were started accidentally. Shortly before midday on 7 February, a combination of extremely high temperatures, very low humidity and very strong winds from the northwest led to these deliberately lit, uncontrolled fires (many joining up to create larger fires) running into inhabited areas and creating the destruction we know about today.

Along with the introduction of the Rural Fires Board, compatible equipment, compatibility between communications systems and generally a more organised approach to fighting fires, perhaps one of the most important introductions to help alleviate the chance of a repeat of that February day was the introduction of the fire permit system in Tasmania.

The permit system was introduced as a recommendation from the several inquiries into the 1966-1967 fire season which identified the need to monitor, and if needed, regulate the use of fire in the Tasmanian landscape.

The current fire permit system is sometimes wrongly perceived by some as a hindrance and designed to stop

people from utilising fires for land and fuel hazard management purposes. The fire permit period is not to stop or reduce the instance of controlled burning on properties. It should be seen as somewhat the opposite. TFS still needs and encourages landowners to reduce fuel hazards on their property and the most effective, quickest and cost beneficial way is to use fire, provided it is done under the right conditions by competent people. The fire permit itself ensures these two important parameters are met.

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**The use of a fire permit period guards against the likelihood of escaped fires and enables TFS to monitor controlled burning during times of increased fire danger in Tasmania. The permit system ensures that fire is managed in the interests of community safety and the safety of Tasmania Fire Service firefighters.**

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The use of the permit system also gives protection to landowners who without a permit may be exposed to criminal and civil liability. Provided that the permit holder acts within the conditions of the permit, section 66 of the *Fire Service Act 1979* aims to protect a permit holder:

*"A person who lights a fire in accordance with the conditions of a permit granted to that person under this section and complies with the directions contained in that permit is not liable for any loss, injury or damage caused by that fire unless it is proven that the person acted maliciously or recklessly". Section 66 (13) Fire Service Act 1979.*

The fire permit system gives landowners ready access to our network of highly knowledgeable and experienced Fire Permit Officers and gives Permit Officers the opportunity to offer advice to landowners. This ensures specific

conditions are discussed with land owners prior to fires being lit.

This fire season, the declaration of a fire permit period was made affecting municipalities in the Northern and Southern Regions at midnight on Wednesday 21 December 2016 and at midnight on Tuesday 10th January 2017, a declaration of a fire permit period was made for the North West Region.


Unlike the declaration of days of Total Fire Ban (TFB), which generally involve a stringent formula for when they are invoked, fire permit periods are declared only after copious amounts of stakeholder engagement with the end users affected by the permit system. The decision to declare a fire permit period is done after detailed discussions with permit officers, TFS District Staff, land managers, farmers and the Bureau of Meteorology.

TFS is currently undertaking a broad scale review into the fire permit system. The catalyst for the review has originated from public feedback (both positive and negative) and, more particularly, from the 2013 Tasmanian Bushfire Enquiry which recommended that Tasmania Fire Service conduct a review of the fire permit system and implement change to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the system.

This review involves engaging stakeholders who are affected by the permit system to identify areas of possible improvement in the way we register, monitor and regulate fire.

We want to give all TFS members who wish to have input the opportunity to do so as the review process moves forward.

In talking about fire permits, it is important to acknowledge the unsung heroes of the system - the Statewide group of dedicated skilled and experienced fire permit officers and the commitment, professionalism and diligence they apply to their appointments.

Fire permit officers are important roles and appointments are endorsed by the State Fire Commission. Senior officers often state they have high confidence in the permit system because of the calibre of our permit officers. 



# TFS newest career firefighters graduate

Story and photos by Richard Onn,  
Acting Station Officer & Manager  
2016 Trainee Firefighter  
Development Program



New recruits with their instructors (in red high vis gear)

On the evening of 17 July 2016 nine slightly apprehensive trainees gathered for an induction BBQ at Hobart Fire Brigade social clubrooms, about to embark on a new career with TFS.

The trainees ranged in age from 22 to 40 years, and came from a variety of backgrounds including construction, banking, corporate, adventure guiding, high performance sport, firefighting and zoo keeping. With such diverse skills and experience, each individual brought valuable life skills to the team.

The morning after the BBQ the recruits started a new chapter in their lives, commencing the Trainee Firefighter Development Program. This is a structured program designed to develop adaptable, critical thinking firefighters.

Over the next 10 weeks the trainees focussed on specific skillsets, building their knowledge and skills week by week, in induction and safety, patient care, firefighting appliances, breathing apparatus, basic and advanced fire fighting, road crash rescue, HAZMAT, wildfire fighting and specialist appliances.

The Trainees were awarded the Certificate II in Public Safety (Firefighting and Emergency Operations) along with their firefighting helmet at the graduation ceremony.

Over the final five weeks trainees consolidated their learnings and applied them in simulated incidents and rescue scenarios. At week 12 the trainees had to undergo a series of extensive assessments to demonstrate to the instructor team that they were indeed ready for the rigours of the operational environment on shift. The trainees were exposed to a simulated shift environment encompassing day, afternoon and night shift rotations during the program.

The core instructor team of SO Jarrod Read, SO Rick Mahnken and ASO Adam



Gearing Up

Salter steered the trainees through the units in a safe and engaging environment. Other TFS guest instructors also delivered 'world's best practice' firefighting strategies and rescue techniques to the Trainees. Further strengthening the TFS/SES integration, SES assisted in providing instruction in road crash rescue and first aid components of the program. Without such whole of organisation collaboration and interagency cooperation this course would not have been the success it has turned out to be.

After 15 weeks eight trainees successfully completed the program – Michael Marshall; Chris Crane; Shaun Edwards; Anthony Cowles; Jacob Holness; Luke Simmonds; Kane Hendy and Nicholas Enright.

The Graduation Ceremony was held on Friday 28 October 2016 at the Cambridge Training Complex. The ceremony was attended by over 150 guests including the Hon Elise Archer MP, Speaker of the House of Assembly; Chief Officer Chris Arnol; various heads of DPFEM and partner agencies; TFS Senior Officers; TFS staff, family and friends.



Learning the ropes

During the ceremony Trainee Firefighter Anthony Cowles delivered an emotional speech recounting his individual and the team journey over the 15 weeks. Anthony also received the Program Dux award, awarded to the most proficient Firefighter during the Program.

Trainee Firefighter Michael Marshall was awarded the James Freeman Trophy. This award is received by the most valued trainee on the program, voted by the trainee team.



At the conclusion of the formal presentations of the graduation ceremony the trainees manned exhibits to showcase the history and tradition of the TFS; community fire safety; urban fire suppression and TFS road crash rescue and vertical rescue capability.

On behalf of the trainees and instructors I would like to thank all who contributed to making the day such a success, particularly D Shift Hobart Fire Brigade. The Trainees were posted to the following locations:

- Michael Marshall posted to C shift Hobart Fire Brigade
- Chris Crane posted to A shift Hobart Fire Brigade
- Shaun Edwards posted to D shift Burnie Fire Brigade
- Anthony Cowles posted to B shift Hobart Fire Brigade
- Jacob Holness posted to C shift Devonport Fire Brigade
- Luke Simmonds posted to A shift Hobart Fire Brigade
- Kane Hendy posted to D shift Hobart Fire Brigade
- Nicholas Enright posted to D shift Hobart Fire Brigade. **FG**



## 2016 James Freeman Award goes to Michael Marshall

Congratulations to Firefighter Michael Marshall, who was awarded the James Freeman Award during the 2016 Trainee Development Program. Firefighter Marshall received the Award after being nominated by his fellow trainees, for his selfless and caring nature, willingness to put others before himself and for his firefighting proficiency.

The James Freeman Award is presented to the firefighter who demonstrates exceptional qualities through their willingness to help others over the duration of the program. It is a recognition of both proficiency and altruism.

James Freeman was a highly respected firefighter who joined the Hobart Fire Brigade in 1963 and served for 19 years. James had a particular passion for looking after the new firefighters and would always find a way to take them "under his wing". He demonstrated values that are highly valued by the Tasmania Fire Service family.

Congratulations to Firefighter Marshall, and good luck in your new career. **FG**

## A new firefighter's perspective – "This is more than a job ... it's a calling"

Story by Anthony Cowles,  
Probationary Firefighter

Photo by Richard Onn,  
Acting Station Officer and  
Manager 2016 Trainee Firefighter  
Development Program.

Nearly losing his family home to fire prompted Anthony Cowles to give up his job as General Manager with a travel company and join Tasmania Fire Service.

"The Dunalley fires in 2013 came close to claiming my family's home in Connellys Marsh. My father saved the house and thankfully none of my family was harmed, but the impact on the community was enormous", Anthony said.

"That event changed everything for me and set me on a completely different path to the corporate world".

His commitment to his new career saw Anthony graduate as Dux of the 2016 Trainee Development Course.

Anthony wrote the following words for Fireground, about his journey to become Firefighter Cowles.

"When it all began, we were competing with almost four hundred candidates to

earn our place at the table. Six months later, when we first met at that BBQ in July, there was no doubt that the common ground was most certainly a feeling of relief to have made it through. However, at that point, none of us knew what an incredible journey of learning, challenge, emotion and camaraderie we were about to embark on.

"In our first week as a team we penned a vision 'to be a team of prepared, knowledgeable and proficient firefighters able to serve the Tasmanian community'. At the time, in our state of ignorant blissfulness, we blindly believed it would become a reality. In fact there were three things that enabled our vision to be realised over the course of the fifteen week program.

"Firstly, the whole TFS community and the numerous people who assisted us along the way. We were genuinely welcomed to the family by everyone we met and immediately felt that everyone wanted to see us succeed. Some would offer advice, some would share stories and others would reassure us that everything would be OK. It was clear from the beginning that we had become a part of a very unique organisation.

"Secondly, the skills set and calibre of our instructors. At various times we were privileged to be tutored by a crew of specialist instructors who shared their knowledge and passion in each of their disciplines.

"And finally, the strength of our team allowed us to prosper at every opportunity. Our motto was 'Courage to



Anthony Cowles, Dux of the Program, addressing the audience on behalf of the trainees

fail. Strength to succeed' – and we lived it. At every point on the journey some would thrive, others would be supported and the team would win, even in the face of adversity. The program was challenging for each of us in different ways but our passion and excitement for what lay ahead always got us through.

"At our graduation we were introduced as firefighters – and couldn't have been more proud. Now, every day our purpose is clear: To preserve life, property and the environment from the impacts of fire.

"Every day we train it is with the desire to be the best that we can be at fulfilling our role. From that day forward we committed to a career of learning and improving and now come to work not knowing what we may encounter. But we know we will always be ready.

"For all of us this is more than a job ... it is more than a career ... it is a calling".

TFS wishes Firefighter Cowles a long and fulfilling career. **FG**



# Interviews with Volunteer

**Brett Lowe** Probationary Firefighter (Volunteer), White Hills Brigade



Brett with White Hills Brigade Chief Michael Long

## **What's your 'day' job?**

I'm currently employed at Hungry Jacks South Launceston as Special Kitchen Hand. My job consists of maintaining equipment, various cleaning tasks, putting stock deliveries away and assisting with making sure all shifts run smoothly as I'm also a team leader.

## **Is this your first experience as a volunteer firefighter?**

Yes, this is my first experience as a volunteer firefighter.

## **What prompted you to sign up?**

I had a in depth discussion with a career firefighter which helped me understand what I want to do with my life: firefighting. So I wanted to gather any experience possible to assist me with this. I truly believe this is a beneficial stepping stone for assisting me with achieving this goal.

## **What do you enjoy most about being a volunteer FF?**

The aspect I enjoy most would easily be the feeling of being welcome to not only my own brigade, but to all the brigades I have trained alongside. Every single

person is very accepting and helps me with anything if I have questions or concerns.

## **What are some of the less enjoyable aspects?**

I'd love to be able to do more training, but I understand it isn't always easy to do as much as I might like.

## **What sort of training did you do to become a volunteer FF?**

A healthy mix of theoretical and practical training tasks with introductions and demonstrations. These include being in a classroom-like environment taking notes and listening to explanations on various firefighting methods and then actually applying said methods in the yard at the Youngtown training facility.

## **What sort of incidents have you been involved with since you started?**

None as yet, but I certainly wish to in the future!

**Tayla Long** Volunteer Firefighter, White Hills Brigade



Tayla with Brigade Chief (and Dad) Michael Long and brother Alex

## **What's your 'day' job?**

I am currently studying at UTas, and have just completed my first year of Primary Education.

## **Is this your first experience as a volunteer firefighter?**

It certainly is. It has been such a wonderful opportunity and experience thus far. I have thoroughly enjoyed every minute of being a part of such a supportive and positive Brigade.

## **What prompted you to sign up?**

My father and brother have both been a part of Tasmania Fire Service for a long time. They are two of my greatest role models so I could not wait to sign up.

## **What do you enjoy most about being a volunteer FF?**

I thoroughly enjoy learning various aspects of firefighting and I am constantly learning new things. I mostly enjoy being part of such a positive team consisting of encouraging and diverse males and females.

## **What are some of the less enjoyable aspects?**

As of yet, I have not found any of the aspects to be less enjoyable. I have thoroughly enjoyed my experiences and training overall so far.

## **What sort of training did you do to become a volunteer FF?**

I have completed the pumps, bush firefighting, basics and first aid courses. I will be completing the structure/mobile course next year which will allow me to become a level one firefighter.

## **What sort of incidents have you been involved with since you started?**

I haven't attended a lot of incidents as of yet, however, I did attend a chimney fire last year. Since then I have mostly attended burn offs.

# recruits

## **Are you hoping to become a career FF in the future sometime?**

I certainly do, I'm very passionate about becoming a career firefighter and will be applying as soon as the application process is open.

## **What sort of things might encourage more people to become volunteer FFs?**

I believe that most basic principle here would be that people need to understand how rewarding being a volunteer firefighter really is. This service provides a healthy, yet enjoyable challenge to anybody who wishes to join and I strongly feel that if everybody knew how accepting the individuals were at TFS, most people would want to join in a heartbeat.

Being a firefighter isn't just helping out people in their time of need (while looking super cool doing it!), it's about joining a family who are as passionate about helping others as you are. As a member of TFS you gain a family like no other, and that is a huge element that makes joining really worthwhile. **FG**

## **Are you hoping to become a career FF in the future sometime?**

Potentially. I am currently studying at University, however, I am very much keeping my options open and it is possibly something I would consider in the future.

## **What sort of things might encourage more young people to become volunteer FFs?**

Perhaps raising awareness relating to volunteer firefighting. A lot of my friends were surprised when they found out I was a volunteer, as they weren't aware that people could join. I think raising more awareness and informing people on how rewarding it is could definitely help to encourage more people to join as a volunteer. **FG**

# Quick response to Warrane Structural Fire

Story and photos – Chris Brown,  
Station Officer TasFire Training



Hobart Fire Brigade shift goes in to extinguish the blaze

A resident was working in his shed at Erebus Street Warrane, early December 2016, when fire broke out.

By chance, Station Officer Chris Brown from Tasfire Training and District Officer Claudio Muench were both driving past at the time. They stopped to render assistance until Hobart Fire Brigade arrived and extinguished the blaze.

The shed contents and dog kennel were totally destroyed but neither the resident nor the animals were hurt. **FG**





*As Deputy Regional Chief TFS, looking at rural urban interface response*

# Profile Chris Arnol

Chief Officer

Chris Arnol returned to Tasmania in March 2016 to take up the reins as Chief Officer, TFS.

Fireground asked Chris a few questions to see what makes our Chief Officer tick!

## What were your early days with TFS like?

I had a great start with TFS – I started with the Burnie Brigade initially as a runner and a volunteer firefighter then joined the permanent ranks in 1985. I was Dux of my recruit course and was then posted to Hobart Fire Brigade.

I was straight into the thick of things with large structural fires. I attended an arson job at the State Industrial Commission on my second night-shift! I remember having a few 'all-nighters' in those first few months including a fire at the Hobart wharf and a blaze at the Jolly Swagman, a camping shop in Elizabeth Street at the time. That one was lit in the basement by a disgruntled employee. I also went to the hottest structural fire I've experienced even to this day. That was in the roof space of the New Sydney Hotel where someone had decided to live for a while. PPE in those days consisted of King Gee workwear, a woollen coat, riggers gloves, a Topguard helmet and gum boots. I thought my ears were going to burn off and some of my hair was actually singed off. But Hobart Fire Brigade (HFB) was everything a job could be to me and I have just loved being part of the Fire Service ever since.

## What were your next steps?

I progressed through my firefighter exams on B shift HFB, then as a leading firefighter I began working with the Regional Fire Investigator. Tasmania was leading the country in fire investigation then and I was excited to be part of that. Soon after starting with fire investigation my career took a different turn – Gavin



*Hobart Fire Brigade Running Team participating in a Torchlight Procession, circa 1990. L-R: Stuart Males, Larry Monash, Chris Arnol, Russell Armstrong; Nigel Reid, Gavin Freeman and Jeremy Smith – all still serving officers with TFS today*

Freeman and I were asked to become Helicopter Rappellers and later introduce High Angle Rescue Techniques (HART, now known as Vertical Rescue). I was thrilled to be introducing a new capability to TFS and we really enjoyed swinging from building to building in Launceston and Hobart, doing Korean descents, run downs and stretcher rescues. We even won a gold medal at the World Firefighters Games at one time. We should do more of that I reckon.

The next step was promotion to Station Officer and I moved between Training and Operations for some years until I was promoted to District Officer. I believe practical exercises are the best way to train and learn and I used to enjoy running scenarios for command training. I still think we should do lots of exercises because it keeps us primed to go and we are all expected to be good at what we do. It is important the community see us out there strutting our stuff in our towns and cities. It gives them confidence in TFS.



*Attending a shed fire at Tasmania Golf Course with Midway Point Fire Brigade (note the King Gee turnouts and Top Guard helmet)*

## Any particular achievements from those early years?

While I always felt that I was making a difference when I was 'on the gear' (I know that expression has a different societal meaning these days) in the fire brigade, I felt a great sense of achievement from my Training days. With the support of the union and volunteer associations we introduced national training standards for firefighters - the Public Safety Training Package that we still use today. We also introduced Compartment Fire Behaviour Training (CBFT). It is important all structural firefighters are skilled in CBFT, it makes us safer and better firefighters.

I did a lot of work on volunteer training. In the 90's TFS had a very centralised volunteer training system. Virtually all brigades had to attend courses at Cambridge. We used shipping containers as mobile props and skilled up enough

Volunteer Training Instructors to deliver the full suite of volunteer training courses right to the doorstep of brigades. As a result we quadrupled training in three years with no increase in budget. I still think it is really important that we work as smart as we can.

Then I was privileged to be selected as part of the first ever Australian firefighter deployment to the United States. Fighting fires in Montana and Idaho was a fabulous adventure. It was also a watershed moment for bushfire management in Tasmania. AIMS ICS was new to us and about 20 of us from Parks, Forestry and TFS went to the US. We really learned how ICS should be applied. Upon our return we created the state's first interagency bushfire protocols which led to the agency collaboration we enjoy in our state today – it's the envy of many other jurisdictions in Australia.

Of course, Tasmania was (and still is) the only truly integrated state fire service in the country so, through necessity, as Deputy Regional Chief - South I began to specialise in Rural/Urban Interface (RUI) fires. I could see that we needed ways to quickly convert fireground chaos into order when confronted with catastrophic bushfire conditions. Mike Brown (then Deputy Chief Officer) suggested I apply for a Churchill Fellowship to study this overseas. The next thing you know I was off on a study tour to visit 1<sup>st</sup> World countries with the same RUI problem we had – i.e. the USA and Mediterranean Europe – yeah, I know it can be tough but someone had to do it! I discovered that California and southern France had pioneered techniques in defensive firefighting operations and I was able to introduce those here in Tasmania. Later I took those learnings with me to Western Australia and I am pleased to say our industry has now adopted standard Defensive RUI firefighting techniques that we will soon see reflected in our bushfire training across the country.

### What took you to Western Australia?

In 2009 my family had all grown up, so I had no real ties anymore. When an opportunity came up to move interstate I thought 'why not?' I applied for the position of Assistant Commissioner – Country Operations. The Department of Fire and Emergency Services of WA was a multi-service, all-hazards organisation and busy operationally all year round. With the northern cyclone season paralleling the southern bushfire season, it was common to be managing multiple major incidents across the State simultaneously. Emergency services there were also challenged to keep pace with demographic changes – in the first five years I was there population was exploding, growing by 1500 people a week – and they all needed protection.



*Clockwise from above left: Attending his first large fire as a Station Officer; As Assistant Commissioner with FESA, with a new WA appliance on show at Perth's AFAC Conference; In the State Operations Centre, WA, as Assistant Commissioner FESA; On deployment to the USA – Montana*

I was responsible for the Fire and Rescue Service, the Bushfire Service, the State Emergency Service and Volunteer Marine Rescue Service in the largest single emergency service jurisdiction in the world – 2.5 million sq km. It was a wonderful experience and I met many great people and visited lots of interesting locations while living there.

### What were your particular achievements in WA?

WA had a major review of operations following the 2010 Perth Hills bushfires where 70 homes were destroyed. In the wake of that review I helped implement sweeping organisational reforms. The previous Fire and Emergency Services Authority was dissolved and a new Department of Fire and Emergency Services was formed with a single Commissioner at the helm. People are often concerned about a major shake-up like this but it was a success and I have yet to meet a firefighter or SES officer who wasn't happy with the changes we implemented there.

### Where to from here?


Having come back to Tasmania it is obvious to me that we have many strengths – we build great trucks, our fire stations are well-equipped, Firecomm provides brilliant support to brigades, our junior program is strong in different parts of the State, we have award winning community fire safety programs and one of the best fuel reduction programs in the country.

However, our population has migrated away from rural areas and that's putting

pressure on volunteer availability. Ensuring the viability of our volunteer brigades is a key issue for the longer term. In my view we can never be grateful enough for the efforts and selflessness of our volunteers. Our communities depend on them.

Tighter management of the public purse, climate change and an ageing population, present quite a few challenges for the fire services of tomorrow. One of the best ways we can respond to those challenges is to combine emergency services. As we experience more frequent disasters, fire, police and emergency services will need to work even more closely alongside each other. As I said earlier, working smarter is the way to go. This means investing in research before we make some of our strategic decisions.

People often say we don't spend that much time firefighting but I reckon we do a lot of our firefighting before fires strike, through our community education and resilience building programs, by encouraging people to take responsibility for the hazards and risk they own and having our own fuel reduction programs and fire permit arrangements. That stuff is all about preparing the battleground. In future our operational 'readiness' will be the measure of success as we closely monitor forecast conditions and local fire potential so we can deliver the rapid weight of response necessary to keep fires small.

Collaboration across emergency services, and working with the community, is the way to keep Tasmania safe. And after all, I think that's why we come to work everyday. 



Story by David Claridge, Volunteer Firefighter Prospect Brigade  
Photo by Chris Tomes, Community Fire Safety Consultant

# Brothers in Arms



Many stories of mateship and sacrifice emerged out of the 2016 bushfire season, one of the most challenging in recent TFS history.

For Prospect volunteer and First Officer, Matt Buck, one of the bigger incidents in the North West gave him the opportunity to work alongside his brother Lawrence, a former TFS member now Victorian who came down with a crew from Cockatoo Brigade.

"We ended up on the same tanker and spent four days at the Wuthering Heights fire, down near Arthur River," he said.

"It was good to see the similarities between the CFA and the TFS, the skills and training seemed to match up.

"I didn't think of him as a brother while we were there, more as a crew member, but we still had a few laughs along the way".

2nd Lieutenant of Cockatoo Brigade, Lawrence Buck, said that

he was simply repaying the favour when his brother went over to help in 2006 and later with the Black Saturday fires in 2009.

"The CFA called on strike teams to come down to Tassie, so I put my name down – being from Tassie myself," he said.

"It was a totally different fire to what we are used to on the mainland. The Wuthering Heights area was peat fire, burning underground most of the time before coming up and setting fire to huge amounts of downed trees.

"In the Franklin sector, our strike team's main role was to black out and attack the head of the fire".

The brothers were able to catch up properly after their rotation finished.

The fire which started at Wuthering Heights Road, near Temma, burnt 22,290 hectares south east of Arthur River. **FG**

## Medallion recognises firefighters sacrifice

Tasmania Fire Service Chief Officer  
Chris Arnol presenting the medallion  
to Stuart Orr



A medallion struck to commemorate the sacrifice made by workers killed on duty involved in emergency services has been presented to the parents of trainee forest worker Tom Orr.

Nineteen year old Thomas Orr was killed in January 2007 during the final stages of fighting a fire complex which started almost seven weeks earlier, and devastated areas around Scamander, Four Mile Creek and St Marys.

Tom was one of six men, all firefighters, recognised for their sacrifice at a ceremony at the National Emergency Service Memorial, on the shore of Canberra's Lake Burley Griffin.

The medallion was accepted by Chief Officer Chris Arnol, on behalf of Tom's family at the ceremony on Friday 29 April 2016.

In accepting the medallion the Chief

acknowledged Tom's service and dedication and described him as well liked and respected by his workmates. The Chief also spoke about the tragedy of a life and career cut short.

The Chief Officer, alongside Steve Whiteley, CEO of Forestry Tasmania, later presented the medallion to Tom's parents, Robyn and Stuart Orr at a special function organised by Forestry Tasmania at their Perth offices. **FG**



Chief Officer Chris Arnol accepts the memorial medallion on behalf of the Orr family, from AFAC President, Commissioner of Fire and Rescue NSW Greg Mullins and Attorney-General of Australia Mr George Brandis

# Recognition for Bushfire-Ready Neighbourhoods Program

Story and photos by Peter Middleton,  
Community Development Coordinator,  
Community Fire Safety

The Bushfire-Ready Neighbourhoods Program (BRN) has won the 2016 Award for Best Practice in the Public Sector (Institute of Public Administration Australia- Tasmania Branch).

The BRN program builds resilience and capacity in bushfire prevention, preparedness and response in Tasmanian communities at risk of bushfire, through a sustainable community development approach.

BRN was chosen from 15 nominations, as an outstanding and innovative community development program. This award is in addition to recognition for BRN by other national and international agencies.

Through a community led approach focusing on research and evaluation, BRN has made a real difference in changing community behaviour and bushfire preparedness across many Tasmania communities. BRN has engaged with over 70 communities since its inception in 2009, including many volunteer brigades.

**The program has undertaken a series of innovative activities with at risk communities and groups, including: tourists, 67' Bushfires Storymap and community liaison with incident management teams.**

"TFS strategic direction 1 – supporting community resilience, emphasises community risk reduction, education and building community resilience. BRN is a fantastic example of these strategies put into practice." *Chris Arnol, TFS Chief Officer*

**Congratulations to the BRN team – well done!**



*Lesley King-A/Community Development Coordinator, Sandra Barber-A/Director Community Fire Safety, Peter Middleton-A/Manager Community Development & Education, David Cleaver-Community Development Officer-N, Chief Officer Chris Arnol (absent- Suzette Harrison, Community Development Officer-N/NW)*



*Lachlan Community Field Day 2016*



*King Island BRN Event, 2016*



# Northern Region Medal Presentations

Story and photos by Sheree Harper,  
Clerical Officer Northern Region

Northern Region held presentations on 26 August and 17 October 2016 to enable our deserving recipients to be presented with their National Medals, Clasps and Long Service Certificates and Badges. **FG**



Northern Region Chief Jeff Harper presenting District Officer Steve Lowe with his 25 Year Clasp



District Officer Steve Richardson presenting Station Officer Paul Catterall with a key tag in recognition of his promotion to Leading Fire Firefighter back in 2001



National Medal & Clasp recipients L-R: Deputy Regional Chief Ian Bounds; and Station Officers Paul Beechey, Anthony Goss, Michael Watkins and David Casteller

# Celebrating Magra Fire Brigade

Story and photo by Paul McMaster, Secretary/  
Second Officer – Magra Fire Brigade

The Magra Fire Brigade is a 100% volunteer brigade. Born from the aftermath of the 1967 bushfires we have steadily grown into a committed and professional brigade. We enjoy strong participation from the Magra area and members often stay for long periods of time.

The Volunteer Association awards night on the 17 November 2016 recognised some of our members' amazing achievements, with two medals being presented for 35 years of service. As a brigade we pride ourselves on our dedication to the Derwent Valley Community and maintain a strong internal culture. **FG**



Back Row (L-R): Keith Russell, Tim Mann, Andrew Pegg and Randal Garwood  
Front Row (L-R) Cecil Triffitt, Ross Johnstone and Wayne Marshall

# New Firecomm recruits

## Alastair Cooke

Hello to everyone, my name is Alastair Cooke and I have recently commenced in FireComm. Prior to my start I have worked in media sales at The Mercury, as a teacher at Drysdale, Event Manager at the DEC as well as various roles in hospitality. In my spare time I referee senior soccer (football), volunteer with Kingston Brigade and spend time with my kids and grandkids. I enjoy good food, better wine and great company. I am looking forward to meeting many of you in the coming months. **FG**

## Cassie Barnes

I commenced with FireComm on 24 October 2016 along with Sue and Al and am really excited about working for TFS. Prior to working in FireComm I was working in Operations at the Lark Distillery and have completed my Masters in Antarctic science after spending a summer season living and studying at Davis Station. Outside of work I enjoy travelling, the outdoors and good craft beer. My partner and I have two crazy French bulldogs who also keep us busy! I look forward to meeting and working with everyone. **FG**

## Susan Oakley

I also started working at TFS on 24 October 2016. I thoroughly enjoy working in FireComm and am finding it to be both exciting and rewarding. For many years this has been a career that I have wanted to pursue. Away from FireComm I run my own aerobics business 'Jazzercise' which I have done for 12 years. My husband is a career firefighter and we have two teenage boys and a very spoilt fur baby. Obviously I love exercise, motor bike riding with my husband and spending time with my family and friends. I'm really excited by this opportunity and look forward to talking to you all soon. **FG**



## Runnymede Brigade Juniors and Cadets

Story and photos by Georgina Laing,  
Coordinator Runnymede Brigade

The group of Juniors and Cadets at Runnymede Brigade always enjoy the training aspects when we conduct a hazard reduction burn.

In August 2016 our task was to clean up for a local farmer after the harvesting of a pine plantation. The evening was calm and mild and provided ideal burning conditions -including multiple spots for marshmallow cooking! **FG**



Hazard reduction burns underway





# From Launceston to Winnipeg

## \* the international firefighting community

Story and photos by Roger Brown, Firefighter, Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service



While Alex and his family are building sand castles in a Tasmanian summer, Roger and his fiancé Tanya are building snowmen in a very white and cold Winnipeg winter.

Roger and Tanya arrived in Winnipeg in August 2016, to some late summer weather where they were swimming in lakes and enjoying summer activities with fellow firefighters. Four months on, they are now ice fishing on the same but now frozen lakes and covering up for frostbite rather than sunburn.

November was a warmer than average month, while December had record lows and reported copious amounts of snow fall, mostly all within a few days. "It was like clicking your fingers, all of a sudden there was snow", Roger said.

Digging the cars out from deep snow and learning to drive, not only on the wrong side of the road but now in snow and ice, is only the start of adapting to new life for the pair.

Fire fighting in these conditions is unbelievably different, as you can imagine. Roger recently attended a house fire in minus 40 deg. Celsius conditions. This type of house fire is not uncommon in Launceston, but pulling fire hoses through a foot of snow, keeping your branch open so your hoses don't freeze solid, having your mask freeze over to zero visibility, were only some of the new experiences involved.

"After exiting the building I could literally see every part of water, steam and sweat freeze on my gear whilst walking back to the truck. Even getting back into the truck was difficult as my jacket and pants were frozen solid, I couldn't bend my arms or legs fully. It was like fire then ice", Roger said.

At over 700,000, Winnipeg's population is more than that of the state of Tasmania, and the fire trucks are kept extremely busy.

The fire trucks where Roger is currently stationed did over 23,000 fire and medical emergencies in 2016. "The experience of responding to both fire and medical emergencies in a different country, is something I will never forget", Roger said.

"I have had the experience of fighting numerous structure fires, my most memorable being the third truck in to a four storey

second alarm fire, which 21 trucks attended. During my four shifts just before Christmas, my truck 'engine 101' attended 48 calls, some of which included two working fires, bomb scares, stabbings, a cardiac arrest and a fatal motor vehicle accident.

"Responding to both fire and medical calls has its challenges. The city of Winnipeg is currently going through a massive drug crisis, with fire trucks being overloaded with many fatal overdose calls. During my last night shift my engine was first on scene to a tragic overdose. We provided medical care and we were able to bring the patient back to life".

Fourteen TFS employees, including fire fighters and a communications officer have participated in the International Firefighter Exchange Program.

Roger said the many months of planning and the cost of the program were well worthwhile and the experience is something he and Tanya will remember forever.

Overall Roger and Tanya have been overwhelmed with the amount of support they've received and the friendships they have formed in such a short period of time. At the end of this experience they are positive they have established lifelong friendships, with numerous of Roger's work colleagues including Chiefs and their families planning their trips to Tasmania.

(If you would like to follow Roger and Tanya's experience, you can follow them on their Facebook page under 'Brown Bear in the Peg'). **FG**



# From Winnipeg to Launceston

## – the international firefighting community

Story and photos by Alex Babinsky, Firefighter, Launceston Brigade



Mountains and echidnas were two big surprises for the Babinsky family when they arrived in Launceston from Canada in August 2016.

Alex Babinsky, his wife Jenna and their boys Emmett (two years old) and Ryan (six years old) are in Launceston for a year, on an International Firefighter Exchange program.

Hailing from Winnipeg in Canada, Alex said his time in Tasmania has been a great experience both professionally and for his family – although learning about cricket and Aussie Rules has been a challenge!

"We wanted to experience something different to Winnipeg, in terms of climate, topography and everyday life, and Tasmania seemed ideal", Alex said.

"We mostly deal with structure and vehicle fires in Winnipeg, rather than vegetation fires, so I'm hoping to take new experiences and skills home to build our own bushfire program".

Alex grew up in Winnipeg, the capital city of Manitoba province in Canada and always wanted to be a firefighter.

He achieved that dream nine years ago, after a year's training in firefighting and paramedicine.

"That's one of the big differences between our Services", Alex said.

"Back home, one firefighter on every fire truck is also a primary care paramedic. We can usually get to an incident scene more quickly than ambulances, and that means we can often stabilise patients until the ambulance arrives".

The weather is another big difference. Although the Babinskys are missing their family, friends and colleagues they are enjoying Tasmania's much milder climate.

"In winter back home, the temperature can drop to minus 40 deg. Celsius with four or five feet of snow so finding infrastructure like fire hydrants can be difficult", Alex said.

"Hydrants freeze up, as do trucks, hoses and the rest of the gear if you don't keep them winterised.




"On the plus side, winter is festival time – the lakes and rivers freeze over, up to five feet deep, so you have restaurants on the ice, skating on the rivers and ice sculptures all around the city".

Alex was full of praise for the way the Launceston Brigade has made him and his family feel at home.

"The Brigade has gone out of their way to welcome us and make the transition to a new country as easy as possible".

Alex has been impressed with TFS programs, especially community education and fuel reduction and is putting together some resources to send back to Winnipeg.

He has also attended a bushfire incident at Karoola and said that despite some differences in equipment the response procedure was pretty familiar.

"I'm looking forward to travelling around this beautiful island a bit more with my family over the summer months (fire season permitting)– while my exchange partner Roger Brown is enjoying a truly white winter back in Canada!" 





# 2016 TASMANIA FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES CONFERENCE

*Working together – the benefits of joined-up emergency management*

If you want to go fast go alone. If you want to go far go together.  
(African proverb).

Story by Margot Dawson,  
Fireground Editor



Hon Rene Hidding MP, Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management

Six months of fire and flood provided much to talk about at last year's Conference, setting the scene for discussions about common ground between TFS and our emergency service partners.

Apart from fire and flood, Conference speakers tackled issues such as the importance of building diversity in emergency services, the importance of community liaison and engagement, and improved volunteer brigade basics training.

Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management the Hon Rene Hidding MP opened the proceedings by noting the high level of cooperation between TFS and SES in particular during the 2015-16 bushfire season. The Minister was particularly pleased to see representatives from all emergency service partners at the Conference, including land management agencies. 'This Conference provides the opportunity for each of us to learn from one another and share our experiences ... We are already doing such great work that goes beyond the traditional response models', the Minister said.

## **The new normal: changing response in a changing climate**

TFS Chief Officer Chris Arnol and A/Director SES Nick Wilson continued on this theme, with presentations emphasising the benefits of joint capability in meeting challenges such as climate change, economic pressures and changes in demographics.

Chris spoke of the shifts in emergency management towards much greater accountability for performance, shared responsibility to develop community resilience and readiness and moving to a multi-hazard response with integrated front line services.

Presentations on the 2015-16 bushfire season and the unprecedented level of interstate and international deployment of personnel and equipment rounded out the first session of the day.

## **Stronger together: what we have learned from six months of fire and flood**

SES Regional Officers Anthony Dick and Michael D'Alton outlined the challenges of once in a generation flood events across Northern and North Western river systems in June 2016. Those floods resulted in fatalities, significant damage to homes, farms, businesses and infrastructure such as roads and bridges. The floods came after flash flooding on the East Coast and in Northern Tasmania in January 2016 and were followed in July 2016 by some of the worst flooding around the Huon and Derwent valleys in two decades. The response to these events once again showed the benefits of TFS and SES working together and sharing expertise and resources.

Peter Middleton, TFS Community Development Coordinator, spoke of the importance of community liaison during emergency flood and fire events.

## Chief Officer's Special Award 2016



The Conference also provided an opportunity for the presentation of the Chief Officer's Special Award 2016.

"The award is for brigades that have been subject to unusual, difficult or demanding circumstances", Chief Officer Chris Arnol said.

"There were so many individual and team efforts that it seems unfair not to recognise everyone. However, I have identified a group of individuals who earned special recognition during the 2015-16 campaign, as examples of all those who worked so hard in recent months".

The awards went to firefighters from 13 northwest brigades who fought to protect communities and properties between Sarah Anne Rocks and Temma on the West Coast on 27 January 2016.

Recipients were:

**Arthur River:** Keith Kingston and Marise Zeitzen

**Burnie:** Nick Johnstone and Adam Rainbow

**Irishtown:** Bruce Cornish, Richard Cornish, Garry Hilcke and Gavin Mathick

**Latrobe:** Mitchell Dutton

**Marawah:** William Gale, Adam Grey, Anthony Grey and David Grey

**Moriarty:** Josh Colledge

**Sassafras:** Cheryl Boatwright, Andrew Perry and Tony Perry

**Sheffield:** Anthony Marshall and Jackson Marshall

**Sisters Beach:** Melanie Batchelor and Maureen Bradley

**Somerset:** Jess Bakes

**Togari:** Rowan Popowski and John Van Loon

**Wesley Vale:** Keelan Dent

**Wynyard:** Shaun West

Peter highlighted the need for TFS and SES to consider what each brigade and unit can do to support communities before, during and after emergencies including having a dedicated community engagement volunteer in place. "We all have a role - whether it's responding to an urgent situation like the fires at Arthur River or planning our community liaison strategies", Peter said.

A panel discussion on fighting fires in Tasmania's wilderness areas featured representatives from the University of Tasmania, the Tasmanian Wilderness Society, Parks and Wildlife Service and TFS, and was moderated by Penny Terry, ABC Radio announcer.

### Working smarter – where to from here

The afternoon sessions included a presentation from Deputy Chief Officer Gavin Freeman on learnings from the two Reviews conducted after the 2015-16 bushfire season. Gavin noted that the Reviews highlighted many positive aspects of the bushfire campaign and had similar themes to improve future performance, including:

- Preparedness
- Local knowledge
- Planning
- Incident management arrangements/framework
- Resourcing
- Communications
- Air operations
- Safety

- Interoperability
- Local knowledge
- Communications systems and information technology
- Finance.

TFS Training Officer Darren Gye spoke to the review of the Brigade Basics Program, with increased focus on safety messages including:

- A redeveloped burn over video updated to TFS new COOGs
- A session on manual handling
- Safely dismounting from appliances
- Hazard awareness and identification.

The improved program also includes a video, better resources for Mentors and a Participant Guide with self-assessment questions.

A presentation by Greg Mullins, FRNSW Commissioner and AFAC President, highlighted the need for Australian fire and emergency services to improve on workforce diversity. Greg identified that career fire services report less than 4% women and generally less than 2% indigenous firefighters, with very low representation from people of non-English speaking background.

'This representation is significantly less than in Police, Ambulance and volunteer services', Greg said.

'The communities we serve are diverse in terms of gender, religion, race and beliefs – how can we understand them unless we include more diversity in our own ranks? Diversity can help create workplaces that foster trust, loyalty, collaboration and inclusion'.

The final sessions of the day included a presentation from Lesley King, TFS Community Development Officer, on bridging the divide with 1967 bushfire stories. Lesley highlighted the divide that exists between emergency services and the broader community:

- A divide in peoples' awareness of their risk, and their expectations of emergency response
- A divide in peoples' knowledge of bushfire behaviour, about what actually happens in a bushfire, and what people THINK they know, what they can do and how they behave.

'Community engagement in bushfire ready neighbourhood programs bridges this divide', Lesley said. 'The program works with the community to raise awareness of bushfire risk and helps people change to be better prepared. Using stories from bushfire history – like the 1967 fires – helps people to understand risk and the need to be prepared'.

The Conference closed with a lively Q&A session with the TFS Chief Officer, Directors and emergency management partners. **FG**

### Save the date



Planning for the 2017 Fire and Emergency Services State Conference is in full swing, please save the date: Saturday 15 July 2017. Eligibility for Friday night accommodation will change to provide for those travelling greater than 2 hours. Availability of numbers will be provided soon.



# STATE FIREFIGHTER CHAMPIONSHIPS – 12/13 NOVEMBER 2016

Story by District Officer Mark Dobson,  
TFBCA President  
Photos by Howard Colvin

The 2016 Tasmanian Fire Brigades Championships Association - State Firefighter Championships were held over the weekend of 12 and 13 November at Launceston's Invermay Park. Unfortunately the weather gods were against us with steady rain experienced from mid-afternoon on the first day of competition through until almost the end of events on day two.

A total of 32 teams competed in 2016, including 19 senior and 13 junior teams who battled it out in a variety of events over two days of competition. Unfortunately the junior events were cancelled on day two, due to the persistent rain.

The Executive Committee introduced two senior divisions in the 2016 Championships. Division One consisted of the top six finishing teams from the 2015 Championship with all other teams competing in Division Two. Feedback has been extremely positive and this format will continue at the 2017 Championships, after which it will be reviewed. Any new teams competing in 2017 will automatically compete in Division Two.

The eventual senior section Division One aggregate winners for the fourth year in succession was Devonport Red. Risdon Vale took out Division Two, and Claremont Red triumphed in the junior section.

## TOP FIVE PLACED TEAMS

Division 1 Seniors	Division 2 Seniors	Juniors
198 – Devonport Red	164 – Risdon Vale	94 – Claremont Red
177 – Claremont Blue	159 – Wynyard	74 – Claremont Blue
168 – New Norfolk Blue	152 – Claremont Red	61 – Ravenswood Red
135 – Rokeby	129 – Ravenswood Red	55 – Gretna Blue
132 – Devonport Blue	112 – New Norfolk Red	45 – Devonport Red

The Championships were extremely well supported by a number of corporate partners once again and I would like to acknowledge the outstanding assistance provided by the following:

### Platinum Partners

Bupa | FRM | Isuzu Trucks

### Gold Partners

PT Hydraulics Australia | LHD Group  
| Chubb | Tassie Instant Marquees

### Silver Partners

Draeger









# Recognising 50 years of service

## to the Queenstown community

*Story and photos by  
Rob Butterfield, Third Officer  
Queenstown Fire Brigade*

After 50 years of service to the TFS and the Queenstown community – including 10 years as Brigade Chief – Bill Tiddy retired on 21 November 2015. Bill was presented with a farewell gift by former Chief Officer Mike Brown on behalf of Tasmania Fire Service.

Bill joined the Queenstown Brigade in 1965, and received many awards over his years of service including:

- National Volunteer and AFSM medals
- West Coast 7XS Emergency Services Worker of the Year
- West Coast Council Tasmania Day Award for community spirit
- Pride of Australia medal.

Bill mentored and developed many new members over his 50 years. His experience also included responding to major incidents such as bushfires around Queenstown and machine shop fires at Mount Lyell.

Bill also played an important role in maintaining the Brigade's appliances and equipment, and was involved with the competition running team from 1965 through to 1990.

Tasmania Fire Service thanks you for your service, Bill.



*Former Chief Officer Mike Brown making a presentation to retiring Brigade Chief Bill Tiddy*

During the evening Service awards were also provided to Brigade members, with Paul Bugg receiving the 40 year pin and certificate.

Simon Enman was presented with the Ian Mitchell AFSM Memorial trophy award for service to the Brigade by a Firefighter, in recognition of his commitment and dedication during the year. The award is kindly donated by Rob and Sandra Deverell. **FG**

## Juniors perform well at Development Day

Junior Development Day 2016 was held at Geeveston Fire Brigade on 17 September.

It was a great event, with 12 Brigades participating, and around 200 people involved.

The Juniors joined in a range of different events including first aid, scavenger hunt and teamwork exercises.

Thanks to Amelia Franklin for organising the event and we look forward to attending Wattle Hill Fire Brigade in 2017. **FG**



*Juniors in action*



Incoming Brigade Chief Victor Kaiser with David Gleeson

# Lachlan Brigade Chief retires

Story and photos by Phil Pyke, Second Officer, Lachlan Brigade

It was the end of an era recently at Lachlan Fire Brigade as Brigade Chief David Gleeson stepped down after leading the brigade for more than 18 years.

David joined the brigade in 1983, and saw Lachlan change from a farming community of livestock, hops and small fruits to small-holder farms and becoming a commuter suburb of Hobart.

Yet for this small brigade at the end of the valley, David has overseen a major change with recognition of the responsibility in protecting the back of the Wellington Range.

"Any fire escaping out of the Lachlan on a day of severe or extreme fire danger will certainly have the potential to impact on Hobart," David said.

"The responsibility placed on the Brigade has given rise to our motto 'Protecting Hobart's Backside Since 1983'. This has been recognised by Tasmania Fire Service with the allocation of a light tanker over the past summer."

Over the years David has attended many fires and incidents - none stranger than coming across a siege while undertaking the annual Santa run.

However events across the 2015-16 fire season when lightning ignited two fires brought one of the biggest changes David has seen in his time - air support.

"With two fires taking off, air support was very quick as it had been two weeks previously with a fire at Illabrook. Once we would have had to battle these fires ourselves or with support from New Norfolk with a straight ground attack."

Incoming Brigade Chief Victor Kaiser paid tribute to David.

"He is someone who is not just dedicated to the Lachlan Fire Brigade but also to Tasmania Fire Service. This is reflected in his 30 years' service with the National Medal and the Tasmania Fire Service Volunteer Medal. We commend David for his service."

David was formally farewelled in a dinner at Lachlan Valley Food and Wine where he was presented with two images of himself taken by The Mercury last year as part of a larger feature.

However, he won't be going far, remaining as a member of Lachlan Brigade as Leading Fire Fighter and undertaking community engagement - and still putting the bins out each week! **FG**



# 45 years of volunteer service to the Franklin community

Volunteer firefighters are the front line against fire in most Tasmanian rural communities.

Story and photos by Rod Coombe, Franklin Brigade

On Monday 30 May 2016, Theo Vermey's long service to his community was formally recognised with the presentation of a 45 years' service award.

South West District Officer Rod Sherrin presented the award in recognition of Theo's invaluable contribution.

"Over the years, Theo has been involved in every aspect of the Franklin Brigade's work", Rod said.



"He's been on the front line fighting fires; he's organised the Brigade's competition and sports events and helped with maintaining equipment and infrastructure at the Franklin Fire Station.

"The presentation is a way for the Tasmania Fire Service to formally recognise Theo's commitment and hard work over many years". **FG**

*Above - Theo Vermey (left) being presented with the 45 year service medal by South West District Officer Rod Sherrin*

*Below - Theo (centre) with Franklin Brigade colleagues and Brigade Chief Craig Walker (far right)*



# Bagdad Brigade presentation

*Story by Trevor Moore,  
Bagdad Brigade Chief  
Photos by Jim Clifton,  
Firefighter Bagdad Brigade*

The Bagdad Brigade invited the Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management, Hon Rene Hidding MP to present the Jordan group with the thank you fire pins issued by the Tasmanian State Government.

The Minister accepted the invitation, and on 28 September 2016 the Minister along with Chief Officer Chris Arnol attended a presentation night at the Bagdad Station.

After a few word of thanks and wisdom, the members were given their pins by the Minister. Both the Minister and the Chief Officer appreciated the opportunity to talk with members and to visit the Jordan Group. **FG**



*Above left to right: Dale Rayner, Senior Station Officer; Trevor Moore, Brigade Chief Bagdad; Rene Hidding, Minister for Police, Fire & Emergency Management; Chris Arnol, TFS Chief Officer; Stacey Peters, Station Officer*



*Above: Jordan Group members*



*2016 bushfire campaign pin*

## Recognition for years of service to the community



Volunteer firefighter Leo Berechree was awarded the Fire Services Medal in the 2017 Australia Day Honours.

Leo began with TFS in 1980 as a volunteer with the Irishtown and Circular Head brigades, and became group officer for Circular Head in 1995. The award recognises Leo's commitment to his community and to the TFS over 21 years.

Congratulations Leo!

*Volunteer Firefighter Leo Berechree at Smithton Fire Station. Picture courtesy of Chris Kidd, The Mercury Newspaper*



# From Sydney University to the TFS

Story by Billy Haworth,  
PhD candidate

In March 2016, PhD candidate Billy Haworth swapped Sydney for a week with TFS Bushfire-Ready Neighbourhoods (BRN) team.

Billy spent a busy week involved in activities including:

- BRN community selection planning day
- UTAS – BRN mapping platform project meeting
- Review of bushfire survival planning tools
- Introduction to community protection planning
- Meeting with Golden Valley residents about community-led bushfire safety initiatives
- Introduction to TFS Firecomm and TFS State Operations.


"I was struck by the scale and diversity of what goes on within TFS, and impressed by the positive attitude to work and the productivity of all the people I met", Bill said.



Billy Haworth

Billy's PhD studies over the past three years have been with the School of Geosciences at the University of Sydney. His research focus is the use of technology – like social media, smartphones and online mapping platforms – to increase public creation and exchange of geographic information. Billy said this creation and exchange process is important for community engagement in bushfire preparation and disaster risk reduction.

"Community engagement is a relatively new approach to emergency management in Australia, and it appeared to me reconciling how this approach fits within the legacy of emergency response service delivery is still a developing area", Billy said.

Billy's placement was arranged through the Bushfire and Natural Hazards Cooperative Research Centre (BNHCRC). "The BNHCRC placement program gave TFS the opportunity to share our work, receive independent input from a student on how we operate, and ultimately build on our action-research approach", Community Development Coordinator Peter Middleton said. 

## Song of thanks to firefighters

Story and photos by Lynda Robins,  
Senior Clerical Officer Northern Region

On 18 May 2016 personnel from Northern Region were invited to attend a morning tea at St Michaels Association, Newstead.

St. Michaels Association is a not-for-profit, non-government organisation, providing accommodation and support to Tasmanian people with intellectual and physical disabilities.

The invitation was extended by one of St Michael's participants Glenn Patterson and was held to thank all firefighters who were involved in the fires of summer 2016.

Glenn told TFS personnel that after seeing the extent of the fires and all the media exposure that he was overwhelmed and wanted the firefighters to know how much they were appreciated by the community. Glenn engaged with his mentors and St Michael's Association Management to get permission to write a song to thank the "firies".

Glenn performed his song on the day of the morning tea, and each and every one of us was amazed at what he had created.

The song itself took only a few days to write but the music took Glenn over a month to compose, with his teachers and mentors helping every step of the way.

In his song, Glenn says 'the courage of the firies is a wonder to behold, they've left homes and families to protect ours'.

Those who attended the morning tea were appreciative and humbled by the hospitality Glenn and the other residents of St Michaels extended to us.



TFS Northern Region members with Glenn Patterson (with guitar)



# Tasmania excels at Competitions

Above: The Team with the shark attack 'victim'!

Story and photos by David Homan, Station Officer Burnie Fire Brigade, and Team Manager

The 2016 ARRO road crash rescue competitions were held in Warrigal, Victoria. TFS and SES teams represented Tasmania, with a total of 17 teams representing Australia, New Zealand and Hong Kong.

Greg Pilkington, Senior Firefighter with Burnie Brigade, was TFS Team Leader. Greg was joined by Tim Potter, Peter Bradow, Alex Wendell-Smith and Alex Godman (also from Burnie Fire Brigade) and Tony Muir, Intensive Care Paramedic with Ambulance Tasmania.

The four hotly contested competition events were controlled rescue, entrapped rescue, time critical rescue and trauma.

Greg's team started with the entrapped rescue, with 30 minutes to complete the job. Their patient had a severe leg entrapment and the team wasn't able to remove them in the allotted time, but they did a great job with all aspects of the rescue.

Next was the controlled rescue with two entrapped patients in a vehicle on its roof with a limb entrapment. Again, the team had 30 minutes to complete the rescue. The team got the limb freed and the first casualty out with the second on the stretcher ready to be moved from the vehicle on the whistle. The team won second placing overall, which was a great achievement.

The third event - time critical rescue - provided quite a lot of work for the team. They had to redirect the vehicle before releasing an entrapment, then complete a roof flap down (as the vehicle was on its side), and finally, remove the patient. The team achieved all this in the allotted 30 minutes.



The Tasmanian Team: L-R Tim Potter; Alex Godman; Peter Bradow; Greg Pilkington; Alex Wendell-Smith; and Tony Muir

Tony Muir and Alex Wendell-Smith had two trauma challenges - a shark attack (which was very realistic with the special effect crew excelling themselves in this one) and a snake bite. The team finished second overall also in this section.

Finishing with two second places out of the four events was an outstanding achievement. The team gained a lot of very valuable experience by participating in the competition. **FG**





40th Australasian Fire Brigades Golf Championships, 13-18 November 2016

# Tasmania wins the State Nett Trophy!

*Story by Shaun Skelly, Captain Tasmania Fire Service Golf Club,  
Senior Firefighter Hobart Fire Brigade  
Photos by Steve Wall and Shaun Skelly*

*Members of all teams from states, territories and New Zealand*

The Championships are held each year with each Australian state and territory along with New Zealand taking in turns hosting the tournament. Tasmania was proud to host the 40th Australasian Fire Brigade Golf Championships during November 2016 at both Royal Hobart Golf Club and Tasmania Golf Club. A total of 160 players and 50 wives participated.

We started the tournament off with a welcome night at the Royal Hobart Golf Club. This is always a great way to start the tournament, catching up with new and old friends. Monday was a Stableford event at Royal Hobart and a bit of practice on the course before the serious golf started for the championship rounds. Tuesday was the first round of the championships at Royal Hobart. Wednesday was a rest day from the golf but the ladies and gents enjoyed a day tour of MONA to explore our fine art and food and relax.

Thursday we were back at Royal Hobart for the second round of the championships. Friday we headed up the road to Tasmania Golf Club where it was a more relaxed fun day hosting a three man Ambrose before finishing off the day at Wrest Point Casino for the presentation night.

While the men were enjoying their time on the golf course, the ladies had a great time attending tours organised by our ladies committee. On Monday the ladies headed to Richmond where they stopped at the Cheese Factory before spending a

couple of hours looking around the town's historic village and then finishing off the day at Puddleduck Winery for a wine tasting. Tuesday saw them head down the Derwent River on the Peppermint Bay Cruise. Thursday they had a great day exploring the historic sites of Port Arthur.

Tuesday and Thursday were our championship rounds where the two rounds were combined to decide state and individual winners. Each state, territory and New Zealand had a team of 6 players which included an emergency. Out of the other 5 players the best 4 scores on both days were combined to

decide state winners. All other players were still competing for various individual honours and also daily prizes.

This year Tasmania's team included Steve Smart, Ian Painting, Jason Mcsherry, Andrew Lowe, Andrew Comer and emergency Shane Hutton. Congratulations to the Tasmanian team for winning both big awards, taking out the State Nett and State Stableford events. This is only the second time ever that Tasmania has won the State Nett trophy, a great finish to the presentation night and a very successful week of golf in Hobart.



*Tasmanian State Team members L-R Andrew Comer, Jason Mcsherry, Steve Smart, Shane Hutton, Andrew Lowe, Ian Painting*





*State Winners – L-R Andrew Lowe, Shane Hutton, Jason Mcsherry, Andrew Comer, Ian Painting and Steve Smart*

### Final Results were:

- 1st Tasmania
- 2nd New Zealand
- 3rd Western Australia
- 4th Victoria
- 5th Queensland
- 6th South Australia
- 7th New South Wales
- 8th Northern Territory
- 9th Australia Capital Territory

Individual honours went to Craig Tuckwell from New South Wales who won the 36 hole individual gross.

I would also like to congratulate some individual performances from Tasmanian players :

- Ian Painting who won the Veterans 36 hole Stableford
- Royce Brougham  
36 hole A grade Nett runner up
- Marcus Skelly  
36 hole B grade Nett runner up.

I would like to thank our fantastic committee who did an amazing effort to make this tournament a great success.

These men and ladies have been working tirelessly over the last two years:

- President Craig Burrows
- Vice President Ian McLachlan
- Captain Shaun Skelly
- Vice Captain Greg Homan
- Secretary Jason Mcsherry
- Treasurer Shane Hutton

#### Committee members:

- Aaron Parry
- Roger Whittle
- Steve Smart

#### Ladies Committee:


- Tanya Smart
- Trudy Homan
- Kym Whittle
- Janine Cullen



*Ian Painting from Tasmania with his 36 hole Individual Stableford Veterans Trophy*

A special thanks must go to Adam Meredith who was our transport co-ordinator for the week. Along with his offsideers Faron Wall and Dave Mulcahy, these men were our bus drivers making sure everyone was delivered to and from the golf course each day.

A big thank you to Debra Pope and Kristy Baker for all the administrative work they put in. I would also like to mention that during the week we raised money for the Children's Burns Unit by contributing all profit's made from the beer cart and any collections from the fines system. I am very pleased to announce that we will present the Burn's Unit with a cheque worth \$1960.00.

On a final note, Tasmania Fire Service Golf Club hosts monthly games across all three regions starting in January through to October. Anyone is welcome to play in these golf days, they are a fun day and you don't need a handicap to play. If anyone is interested in joining our club and playing in some of our days you can contact me via e-mail [shaun.skelly@fire.tas.gov.au](mailto:shaun.skelly@fire.tas.gov.au) 


## 50 years celebration

*Story and photo by Steve Hickie,  
Third Officer Lauderdale Brigade*

December 2016 marked 50 years since the Lauderdale Fire Brigade first took Santa around Lauderdale in their 1928 Chevrolet fire truck, distributing lollies to young and old.

The Chevy truck was originally built by Queenstown volunteers. The Lauderdale Brigade bought the truck from the Franklin Brigade in 1959, with donations from the local community.

And in 1966, the Christmas run began. Nowadays the Brigade gives away about 100kg of lollies each Christmas.

Although the truck now spends most of its time in the TFS Museum, people love to see it and Santa every Christmas morning. 

*Lauderdale Fire Brigade's 1928 Chevrolet fire truck steadily climbs Bayside Drive during the Christmas run*





# Remembering A Great Bloke – the Paul Horne Memorial Trophy

Story by Phil Pyke, Second  
Officer Lachlan Brigade

Photos by Stacey Peters,  
Field Officer Midlands District

**T**hick fog and freezing cold temperatures didn't deter three crews from Gretna and other crews from Magra, New Norfolk, Brighton and Westerway from contesting the Paul Horne Memorial Trophy in the Midlands 4 x 4 Competition.

Lachlan Brigade hosted the event in July 2016, with crews following grid references across the Valley.

Stands involved:

- map reading and radio procedures
- chainsaw operations
- 4 x 4 hill challenge
- questions and answers
- first aid
- hose drills and pumping from draught.



*Presenting the trophy to Ross Johnstone of Magra Brigade – Tina Horne and family*

The event is a commemoration to Paul Horne, a great bloke and friend to many as the former Midlands District Field Officer.

Paul's wife Tina and family presented the unique competition trophy to the winners (and current holder of the Trophy) - Magra Brigade. Chief Officer Chris Arnol took the opportunity to visit the 4 x 4 Competition and meet the participating crews as he toured the stands. **FG**



*Chief Officer Chris Arnol and District Officer Dale Rayner visit the pumping stand with Gretna and Lachlan members including Brigade Chief Victor Kaiser (far left) and assessors Fourth Officer Peter Felmingham and Fire Fighter Dion Barnshoorn*





# Pacific Island firefighters welcomed to Tasmania

Story and photos by Emma McGrath,  
Media Liaison Officer, DPFEM

Above left to right: Learning and Development officers from Southern Region with the Nauru team: Adam Salter Acting Station Officer; Roteiga Adeang; Celso Dageago; Nanitten Temaki; Kedron Kun; Mark Bryant Station Officer

During mid-November 2016, TFS hosted four firefighters from the Nauru Fire Service (NFS) through an arrangement that has spanned over a decade. The Nauruan firefighters participated in a two week intensive skills acquisition and maintenance course conducted by TFS.

Acting Station Officer Adam Salter spent a fortnight with the firefighters providing them with valuable skills to take back to their island home.

"We take an all-hazards approach to training our Nauruan counterparts. At the end of the fortnight they are skilled up in vegetation, structural and vehicle firefighting, road crash rescue, breathing apparatus procedures and urban search and rescue.

"We pack a lot in to the fortnight and the firefighters return to Nauru with new skills they can pass on to their local colleagues. This allows them to improve their technical capacity and enhance their levels of fire protection, community safety and emergency management. The support we provide to the NFS helps to build resilience in the Pacific Island nations," Mr Salter said.

The training takes place once every two years through a cooperative agreement called the Pacific Islands Fire and Emergency Management Alliance. The Alliance pairs member agencies of the Australian Fire and Emergency Services Authorities Council (AFAC) with Pacific Island nations, providing for cooperation in the areas of training and capacity development, and the provision of equipment. Every State in Australia participates in the program which is funded by the individual Pacific Island governments. **FG**



# Firies complete Launceston Ten

Story by David Claridge, Volunteer Firefighter Prospect Brigade

Photos by Paul Scambler



Fitness is important when it comes to being involved in emergency services, whether it involves rescue or combatting a dangerous fire.

A number of volunteer firefighters from local brigades banded together in the Launceston 10 in June 2016 to prove that they have what it takes.

Rocherlea volunteer, Laura Smith, said she had been wanting to try the ten kilometre course for some time.

"When the opportunity to run as a member of a team presented itself, I found I had more motivation to train, and I definitely had more fun on the day," she said.

"It was challenging in ways that I did not expect. The day after commencing an eight-week training course I was struck down with acute appendicitis. I recommenced training four weeks out from the race and based on my training times I knew my previous one-hour goal was out the window, and settled for being able to get through the race without walking. Overall, the race was not the near-death experience I believed it would be.

"I don't think enough can be said about the importance of a healthy lifestyle for volunteer firefighters. Being physically fit and strong has made such a difference to my performance on the fireground, and I hope that other volunteers will be inspired to join us at next year's race.

Launceston 10 veteran and Hadspen volunteer, Scott Aalbrecht, said that he performed better than last year.

"Doing the race as a team of different brigades was a good experience," he said.

"It wasn't a competition but a team building exercise to help everyone along and make it to the finish.

"It was a real achievement – 10 kilometres is a long way on foot!"

The group finished within a good time of around an hour, close together.

The Launceston 10 has been running since 2007. It is recognised as the fastest 10km road race in Australia. **FG**

## Tasmania Fire Service still busy at Agfest

Story and photo by David Claridge, Volunteer Firefighter Prospect Brigade

Tasmania Fire Service members from around the state volunteered at Agfest in May 2016. Rowella Brigade Chief operations officer Danny Penny said while the service is there to control fires, Agfest was a great place to promote fire safety awareness.

"There were representatives from the Fuel Reduction Unit to give people advice on preparing properties for the fire season, as well as representatives of the Community Bushfire Education Unit to answer questions.

"Tas Fire equipment also had a tent here to sell fire-fighting items for the home," he said.

"We had our showbags for the kids and there was a hands-on electronic fire extinguisher display for anyone interested in having a go".

Fire incidents at Agfest have been rare, but the station has two vehicles ready to go in the event of something happening.

"It was mainly quiet on the fire side, which is the way we like it," Danny said.



Kyle Squibb and Danny Penny

"The worst incident we have had in recent years was a plane crash, but normally we just get bin fires".

Devonport volunteer Kyle Squibb returned for his second posting at Agfest. "I came back because it is a lot of fun, I enjoy talking to people and the community engagement", Kyle said. **FG**

# New Fire Stations for North West

Story by Margot Dawson,  
Fireground Editor

Photos by Emma McGrath,  
Media Liaison Officer, DPFEM

9 December 2016 was a big day for the North West with the opening of new fire stations by Hon Adam Brooks MP. Mr Brooks commented on the great work that volunteer firefighters do in their communities, and said it was an honour to spend time with the brigades and hear the histories of not only the significant fires that they have faced, but also the work they do supporting all Tasmanians.

The Sassafras Brigade celebrated the opening of their new station with gusto – and cake!

The new fire station is a larger, purpose-built facility for the enthusiastic and professional Sassafras volunteers and the Sassafras community. The new facility includes two engine bays, an office and training room.


The new Forth Valley station at Forth will house the previously amalgamated Turners Beach and Forth Valley brigades. Situated halfway between Turners Beach and Forth, the new station will mean Brigade members can respond to incidents more quickly.

Chief Officer Chris Arnol acknowledged the work of Sassafras and Forth Valley Brigade Chiefs in developing and retaining volunteer membership.

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**“If we want people to give their time to help keep their communities safe, we need to ensure they have the right facilities and equipment. These new stations are part of our commitment to our TFS volunteers into the future.”**

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“Volunteer firefighters are incredibly important to our capacity to respond to incidents including bushfires, structural fires and HAZMAT situations”, Chris said. 



Above: Sassafras Brigade members with (L-R) Hon Adam Brooks MP, Shane Batt A/Regional Chief NW, Gavin Freeman Deputy Chief Officer and Chris Arnol, Chief Officer



Right: The cake was delicious!



New Forth Valley Station



Appliance ready to go at the new Forth Valley station



# Letters of appreciation ...

Minister for Infrastructure  
Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management  
Level 1, Fortikin Square Office | HOBAK | TAS 7000  
Ph: (03) 6165 7686



TO ALL OUR WONDERFUL TFS VOLUNTEER 'FIRIES'

Best Wishes For Christmas And The New Year

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your commitment to both the Tasmania Fire Service (TFS) and your own community. Volunteers are the very fabric of our community and your commitment of time and effort promotes teamwork and respect and also enhances community resilience and spirit, especially in times of emergency.

The Government values the volunteers in TFS very highly. My position is that we need to invest in support for volunteers in the same way that employees are supported. An investment in volunteers is vital to providing a strong Fire Service and is also an investment in the Tasmanian community. I can assure you that this Government will not reduce funding to the TFS and support for you will be strengthened.

This year there has been significant progress in the alignment of TFS and SES volunteers. Many initiatives for closer collaboration and resource sharing have already been identified within the areas of emergency management policy and planning, operations and training, facilities and assets, learning and development and community education and awareness. Also, SES volunteers now benefit from the additional support of the TFS volunteer management system. To further this work I have asked the Chief Officer to develop a comprehensive Volunteer Strategy to improve the recruitment and retention of volunteers in both TFS and SES. I have also asked that he set a program of increased visits by Senior Officers to volunteer brigades.

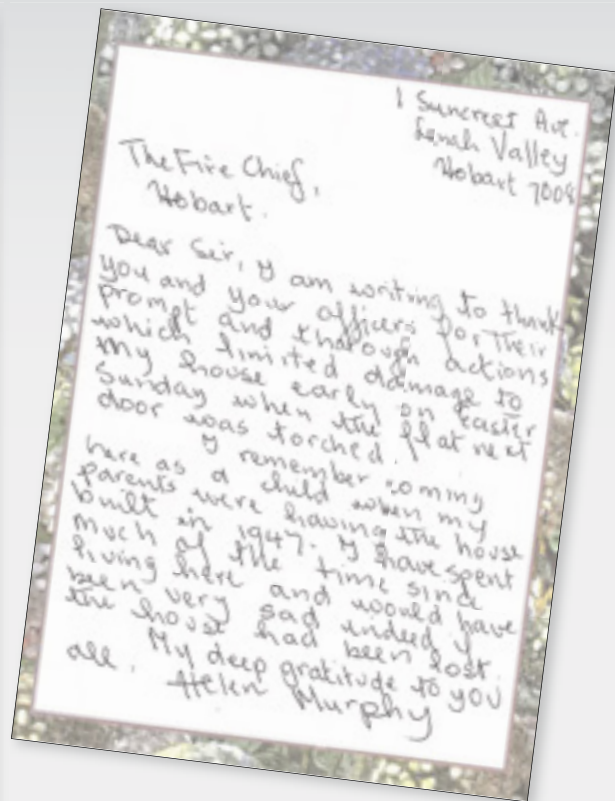
I recently attended the roll out of 25 new tankers with CAFS capability. These new vehicles are purpose built and designed locally to provide greater safety and efficiency for brigades responding to fires. These new trucks play a crucial role as frontline fire vehicles and will provide our communities with the highest level of protection against fire. I am therefore very pleased to see that over the next three years another 85 tankers will be built. They will all be built locally by our own outstanding team at Cambridge.

Some time ago I became aware that the position of Coordinator Volunteer Strategy had not been filled. After I discussed this with the Chief Officer he appointed a new Manager (Strategic Projects and Engagement) reporting to the Deputy Chief Officer. This person will, from now, be the volunteer liaison Manager and act as a central contact point for all volunteers. The newly created People and Culture Division of the Department of Police, Fire and Emergency Management (DPFEM) will continue to find ways to assist the development of the volunteer workforce. They will also continue to provide workers compensation and welfare support. It has been some time since the Volunteer Handbook was comprehensively reviewed. The Chief Officer has agreed to review the handbook in the near future.

Finally, I would like to thank you again for your commitment to the TFS throughout 2016 and wish you and your family a safe and happy Christmas and New Year.

Yours sincerely,

Hon M. T. (Rene) Hidding MP  
Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management



Letter from Helen Murphy in regard to a house fire on Easter Sunday, 2016, at Lenah Valley

## Certificate of Appreciation

This certificate is awarded to

**TASMANIAN FIRE SERVICE**

in recognition of your generous support for the  
2016 St Virgil's College Junior School Fair.



Mr Andrew Pinelli (Head of Junior School)

Mrs Simone Ashby (President of the P&F)

Tas Fire Service Hobart  
Cnr Argyle & Melville Sts  
HOBART TAS 7000



Dear Supporters

Thank you for gathering, sharing & giving in the fight against cancer!

It gives me real pleasure to write and thank you for your wonderful efforts in raising funds for this year's Australia's Biggest Morning Tea.

You, our hosts are the heroes, and each year, you tirelessly donate your time and talents to help fight cancer, for this, we THANK YOU.

As you may already know the success of Australia's Biggest Morning Tea comes from the wonderful generosity with time and money from all Tasmanians, both individuals and organisations.

We are pleased to announce that well over \$338,000 has been raised by Tasmanians through 800 registered morning teas, this certainly shows the warmth and generosity there is in our state and how much can be achieved by raising a cup.

While we can't list every single (and very valued contribution here), we would like to highlight the incredible efforts of some of our top fundraisers.

1. Romilda - South Hobart	\$16,650	7. Can-Hope New Norfolk	\$4,695
2. IGA & Cripps Nubake	\$9,717	8. Scottsdale Cuppa for Cancer	\$4,081
3. Lisa & Allison - Raillon	\$8,337	9. Geeveston Bowls Club	\$4,068
4. Janet - Flowery Gully	\$8,245	10. Greek Community of Hobart	\$4,010
5. Chris & Mary-Anne	\$8,169	11. Ashgrove Cheese	\$3,919
6. Grindelwald Estate	\$5,093	12. Cressy Newsagency	\$3,740

As a charity, we rely on the generosity of supporters like you to really make a difference. Cancer Council Tasmania uses the funds to invest in vital research, prevention programs and support services.

All funds raised stay in Tasmania and you can be confident that your amazing contribution is directly assisting people in your local community.

Yours sincerely,

Jane Crosswell  
Director, Business Development & Fundraising

Cancer Council TAS  
180-184 Collins St  
Hobart TAS 7000  
ABN 27 556 250 730

T 03 0212 6710  
F 03 0212 5765  
E [sponsor@cccounciltas.org.au](mailto:sponsor@cccounciltas.org.au)  
[biggestmorningtea.com.au](http://biggestmorningtea.com.au)



## TASMANIA POLICE

Human Resources

Tasmania Police Academy  
South Arm Road,  
NORMBY TAS 7519  
Phone (03) 4230 2000 Fax (03) 4230 2044  
Email [tasmania.police@police.tas.gov.au](mailto:tasmania.police@police.tas.gov.au)  
Web [www.taspolice.tas.gov.au](http://www.taspolice.tas.gov.au)



Our ref: A/S/18877  
Your ref:  
Enquiries: Senior Counselor (2) Kathryn Barwick

28 September 2015

Mr Anthony Goss  
Tasmania Fire Service  
GPO Box 1526  
Hobart 7001

Dear Mr Goss

I write in relation to the assistance that you provided to the 2015 Investigator Professional Development Program on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2015.

In constructing and delivering specialist courses such as these, the Tasmania Police Academy relies heavily upon the support that is provided by various individuals and agencies. Your cooperation, assistance and support to the facilitation of the training that you delivered, contributed to the professionalism of the program, and enabled the students to engage in a classroom experience that was able to deliver outcomes linked directly to the learning requirements.

Your personal and professional support contributed to the successful delivery of the program and it is appropriate that the Course Directors and I express our appreciation for the time and effort which you so kindly provided on this occasion.

Yours sincerely

APJ Cerritelli  
Commander

*Email to David Cleaver, Community Development Officer, Community Development & Education Unit from Lisbeth Berridge of St Helens Point Progress Association*

Dear David

On behalf of the St Helens Point Progress Association I would like to thank you for the very informative, interesting and well prepared talk you gave to our group last Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> October 2016. You certainly stirred up a lot of interest and you will shortly hear from our President Paul Wright regarding a workshop to help Stieglitz residents gauge their preparedness, improve their knowledge of how to prepare and what to do in the event of a fire; vital information as we have only one route in and out which can be easily blocked by a small fire.

We look forward to having you speak to us again to help us through this coming fire season.

Best wishes

Beth Berridge, Secretary St Helens Point Progress Assoc

Lakeview Drive  
CRAMPS BAY 7030

23 January 2016

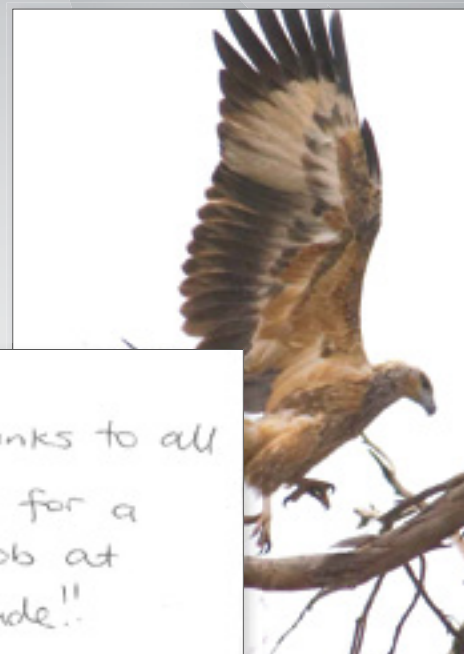
Mr Mike Brown  
Chief Officer  
Tasmanian Fire Service  
GPO Box 1526  
HOBART TAS 7001

On 24 Jan 16 a number of Tasmanian Fire Service (TFS) crews, supported by two helicopters, responded to an illegally lit fire at Cramps Bay. The actions of those involved prevented the fire from spreading and threatening the shacks nearby.

On behalf of the shack owners of Cramps Bay, I would like to thank all those involved in the response to this incident. The rapid and very well coordinated response of the crews involved was instrumental in containing the fire.

Could you please pass on our gratitude to those involved for their outstanding and highly professional response to this incident.

Dave Riordan



Many thanks to all  
at TFS for a  
great job at  
Fernglade!!

— much appreciated

Kind regards  
from all at  
Friends of Fernglade



# ... and gratitude

*Excerpt from letter of appreciation sent by Steven Kurian to Deputy Chief Officer Gavin Freeman, 26 February 2016*

I am a volunteer with the Rural Fire Service of NSW and have just returned from a deployment from Strathgordon that was tasked to the Maxwell River (South) fire.

I would like to thank and commend your staff who were managing the incident at Strathgordon on their friendliness and professionalism in how they managed this complex incident with the number of personnel from the different agencies in attendance. All our needs were met and I can confidently say that this was one of the best managed deployments I have attended after having attending a number of deployments across Australia as a Remote Area Firefighter.

Given the pressure for your department to take action on the Strathgordon fire, I was particularly impressed and comforted by how your team prioritised the safety and welfare of the Remote Area crews by not deploying us when the weather conditions were unfavourable. You can only appreciate the dangers faced by Remote Area and Aviation crews once you get to the fireground. The steep slippery slopes, rough, dense terrain, poisonous wildlife and the ever changing weather conditions we have to contend with are factors not to be taken lightly.

Wishing you, your team and all the firefighters from the different agencies the best.

*Email from Peter Collidge to Peter Middleton, Coordinator- Community Development, Community Development & Education Unit, expressing appreciation for the BRN Program's Magra Expo, November 2016*

Peter

Thank you for your presentation and all the work you put in to make it a very informative expo.

Randall and Mick are coming up to my place for a site check in a few weeks' time and I am inspired to dust off my FMP and update my checklist of actions and equipment.

Randall said that smoke is a real issue so I am going to buy me and the missus some good quality goggles.

Have already sent Eve an email to see if I can get involved with the Derwent Catchment Group.

All-in-all it was well worth the time.

Regards

Peter

*Email from Heather Southwood  
Wednesday, November 18, 2015*

Huge thanks to the Tasmanian Fire Service firemen for showing a very excited little boy over their fire engine the other day!

They were parked outside shoreline shopping centre while one of their team ran in to grab something, and upon hearing Rowan's ultra-excited squeal of delight (their ears being highly attuned to noises the approximate pitch and volume of a fire alarm) they climbed out and showed him all the engine features with great patience, kindness and generosity.

For a small boy obsessed with hose fittings, electrical outlets and water pipes, it was like Christmas and birthday rolled into one! I can certainly see why people like this are heroes to little kids.



7 JAN 16

JOHN KENZIE  
MOLE CREEK HOTEL  
MOLE CREEK  
TAS 7304.

Dear Carol,  
Just a quick note to say thank you so much for your help with my application to join the TFS Mole Creek Brigade as a volunteer fire fighter. I really appreciate both your and the TFS's assistance in this regard and hope that I will be up to any task asked of me. Thanks once again. Yours truly,  
John



## INVITATION

FREE, FAMILY-FRIENDLY EVENT

The Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management, Rene Hidding MP, wants to acknowledge the community spirit and contribution of our emergency services during the 2016 Bushfire campaign. He invites you to join him for a BBQ lunch, and to relax with colleagues, family and friends.

WE ALL  
THANK  
YOU

CELEBRATING  
TASMANIA'S  
COMMUNITY  
SPIRIT

### WHEN:

12 – 3pm  
Saturday, 30 April 2016

### WHERE:

Marist Regional College  
Paraka St, Burnie

### REGISTER TO ATTEND:

rsvp@dpac.tas.gov.au  
or 6232 7035

### WHAT'S ON?

- Activities for all ages
- Emergency service vehicles to explore
- Live music and entertainment
- Free BBQ

### FREE BUSES!

(LIMITED AVAILABILITY)

Buses will leave from Hobart, Launceston and other satellite locations as required. Book your seat by **Wednesday 28 April** to rsvp@dpac.tas.gov.au or 6232 7035

### DRESS CODE

Neat casual or full uniform

Visit the [Tasmania Fire Service](#) page for event updates and to invite your friends and colleagues.

#ThanksTassie



Minister for Infrastructure  
Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management

Level 1, Franklin Square Office HOBART TAS 7000  
Tel: (03) 6462 7686



16 MAY 2016

Mr Chris Amol  
Chief Fire Officer  
Tasmania Fire Service  
GPO Box 1526  
HOBART TAS 7001

Dear Mr Amol

I was immensely proud to host the Bushfire Thank You Event for emergency service staff, volunteers and their families in Burnie on the 30 April. The day was a chance for those who took part in the bushfire campaign to catch-up and relax with their colleagues and share stories over a BBQ lunch.

Every Tasmanian can be proud and very grateful for the role our emergency services played this summer, and likewise I would like to extend to you and your staff my personal thanks for your generous support in assisting deliver this well-deserved event. In particular the time invested planning and then staffing the emergency service vehicle display on the day was highly commendable. These displays were the focal point of the event and demonstrated the collaborative approach our emergency services took in responding to the bushfires.

While fire is a natural and unavoidable part of Tasmania, what we faced this summer was unprecedented in scale. There were more than 165 bushfires in the month 13 January to 13 February, and an additional 64 vegetation fires were recorded up to 15 March. The sustained effort of our emergency services in responding to these often remote and inaccessible fires, was nothing short of exceptional.

During the 60 continuous days of the campaign there were 1100 TFS and SES personnel; more than 200 Parks and Wildlife personnel; and around 100 Forestry Tasmania personnel deployed. The vast majority of these undertook multiple rotations meaning there were thousands of personnel rotations by Tasmanians. In addition over 1000 personnel from Victoria, NSW, ACT, QLD and South Australia and 87 of our New Zealand friends were there to help too.

The families that attended this event had a great time and your involvement made this possible. Please pass my congratulations onto the staff involved in delivering this fabulous event, particularly those in the northwest region.

Yours sincerely

Hon M.T. (Rene) Hidding MP  
Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management



HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

*Speaker's Rooms  
Hobart*

29 February 2016

Mr Gavin Freeman  
Deputy Chief Officer  
Tasmania Fire Service  
GPO Box 1526  
Hobart TAS 7001

Dear Mr Freeman

Thank you for your exceptional work in overseeing the Tasmania Fire Service (TFS) operations throughout this bushfire season.

Although we have faced some significant challenges this summer, particularly in the western region of the state, there is no doubt that your calm leadership has minimised damage to property and bushland as much as possible.

Tasmania is privileged to have the benefit of your experience and dedication to the TFS, and I have no doubt you are looking forward to supporting Mr Amol when he formally takes up the TFS Chief Fire Officer role on 21 March 2016.

Again, thank you for your outstanding leadership and commitment to keeping our state as safe as possible in difficult and challenging circumstances.

Yours sincerely

The Hon Elise Archer MLC  
Speaker of the House of Assembly

Mailing Address: PO Box 426, Moonah TAS 7009  
Phone: (03) 6212 2210 Fax: (03) 6212 2258  
Email: [elise.archer@parliament.tas.gov.au](mailto:elise.archer@parliament.tas.gov.au)

THANK  
YOU  
Tasmania  
Fire Service



#### SAVE LIVES LIKE JO'S

Jo owes his life to countless donors. He was diagnosed with bladder cancer at age two and needed whole blood, plasma and platelets to survive.

In 2016, a total of 108  
blood donations have  
been made by  
Tasmania Fire  
Service at Hobart  
Donor Centre. That's  
324 lives saved.

On behalf of the  
recipients across  
Australia, thank you.

108  
donations

13 January 2017

RED25

Australian Red Cross  
BLOOD SERVICE



# ... and thanks.

9 June 2016

Just sending you some thank you letters that students have written in my class in relation to the recent floods. I hope that you will encouraged and blessed by their letters.

Kind regards,  
Alexandra Nielsen  
Newstead Christian School



To the Wonderfully Brave  
Fireies, a very big  
Thank you

Thank You.

for your endless hours  
you devote to saving lives  
& our state.  
you deserve Medals for  
Bravery. I take my hat off  
to you all.  
I thank you  
obaron Brooks.

The Manager,  
Launceston Fire Department,  
339 Hobart Road,  
Launceston Tas. 7250

26<sup>th</sup> May 2016

Dear Sir,

I am writing to say a huge thank you & to commend you & your staff who attend fires, accidents & emergencies through out Launceston and the surrounding areas.

Earlier this month my husband & I were in a car accident & due to my injuries, it was necessary for the Firemen attending, to cut me out of the vehicle. Never once was I not told exactly what was going on & to expect loud bangs as the doors were removed. Their expert & skilled work meant that I was out as quickly as possible & on my way to hospital.

Whenever I hear a Fire Truck or Ambulance siren, I always pray that the Lord will help you to reach those who are in need quickly. Now having been on the receiving end of such care I have a new understanding of the commitment, dedication, skill & serving heart that you all truly have.

Thank you for being there so quickly in our time of need, may the Lord bless you all abundantly as you continue to bring excellent service & compassion to our community.

Kind regards

Mark & Josie Ford

Hi my name is mia Hankin I live  
at Lower Longley Yesterday  
there was a fire it made me feel  
safe that you where there putting  
it out thank you for your work



# New Emergency Services Facility in Swansea

On 13 August 2016, Hon Rene Hidding MP, Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management, officially opened the new Glamorgan Spring Bay Fire and Emergency Services Facility. Located in Maria Street, Swansea, the new building houses Tasmania Fire Service, State Emergency Service and Ambulance Tasmania.

"Each service has their own storage areas, large vehicle bays and ample parking, and the Swansea Volunteer Rescue will share the training room facilities", Mr. Hidding said.

"This new combined facility, which is supported by a large number of volunteers in the region, will allow a rapid response from emergency services to a wide area extending beyond the township of Swansea".

Mr Hidding said the new facility is an example of the State Government's commitment to ensuring Tasmania's dedicated emergency services have the best facilities possible to help the Tasmanian community, and is a testament to the cooperation between the three emergency services and all three levels of government. **FG**



Above: Cooperation between emergency services at the new facility



Left: Minister for Police, Fire and Emergency Management, Hon Rene Hidding MP, officially opening the new facility



# POWERFUL BUSHFIRE FROM REDPA PRIMARY SCHOOL

Experienced firefighters regularly face up to the dangers of bushfire and other hazards and it can be easy to overlook the impact of such events on 'civilians', especially children.

Students at Redpa Primary School shared their memories of the 2015-16 bushfires with words and images describing how they felt about the dangers to themselves, their families and communities. The Circular Head brigades were so impressed with the children's work that they reproduced them as placements for tables at the 2016 Christmas function. The placements provide a lasting memory of how bushfire impacts communities.

Here are the images and extracts from the words the children used to describe their experience of bushfire. **FG**



Nara: There was lots of smoke and the smoke smelled bad. You could hardly breathe because there was so much smoke



Lachlan: The aftermath was devastating. A lot of the Tarkine and Arthur River was burned and destroyed



Nick: When I found out about the fire I was sad for the wildlife. I also felt safe because I thought it couldn't jump the river



Jhett: There were fire trucks and helicopters trying to put out the fire and the fire had jumped the road



# IMAGES



*Tarj: I felt shocked because of how big the fire was. My Pop went to help put it out, I didn't want him to go*



*Alex: I was worried for all the houses, wildlife, the bridge and all the people who stayed to protect their houses*



*Brianna: We nearly had to evacuate. It was very smoky...the smoke was grey, thick and smelled really bad*



*Shalyley: I remember when I was at my Nan's and we were trapped between the Mawbanna and the Wynyard fires. The sun looked red when the smoke covered it*



*Lucas: Last summer a monster of a fire took over most of the land. I was shocked and scared... It was bad for my grandparents. They got stuck and nearly burned*



*Chelsea: Mum told me if the fire got any closer then Hayley and I would go straight to our Aunty's house. I didn't want to leave my home*



# Circular Head Brigades celebrate Christmas in style

Story and photos by Libby Grey.  
(Libby is the wife of Marrawah Brigade 2nd Officer Anthony Grey).



Clockwise: Maree Kingston, Jo Batt, Leo and Diane Berechree, Ian and Gina Heres, Trevor Kingston

A Christmas Dinner for the Circular Head Volunteer Fire Brigades was held on Saturday 26 November 2016, as a chance for the volunteers and their families to enjoy a social get together in appreciation of their tireless work. A Christmas roast meal was beautifully presented by the Redpa Football Club and thoroughly enjoyed by all.

The Marrawah Brigade organised and hosted the dinner on the back of a testing 2015-16 fire season. Chief Officer Chris Arnol, Deputy Chief Officer Gavin Freeman, Acting North West Regional Chief Shane Batt, Acting District Officer Tyron Clark and Field Officer Nick Johnston attended the function.

In his address, the Chief made mention of the tireless work our volunteers do and thanked them for the huge effort during last season, when they were faced with extreme conditions and were stretched to the limit. He also recognised the support of firefighters' family and communities. He then acknowledged the understanding from employers during this last season and the commitment of the self-employed, who found it necessary to employ others to do their work so that their expertise could be used on the fire front.

A bus was provided (thanks to Robbie and Cindy Edwards of Cowbiz Stockfeeds) to deliver guests to the Marrawah Hall. The night was full of fun and with ex-Marrawah publican Mr Peter Benson in fine form as MC for the night. Mr Benson provided great entertainment in commenting

the games that guests were invited to participate in. Special mention must go to competitors in the 'Know your hose drill' with Smithton Fire Chief Trevor Kingston showing extreme skill in handling his apparatus, and for the 'Water bombing' exercise, where the Deputy Chief Officer, Gavin Freeman showed his skill and precision in aerial attack.

There was a major raffle held with some great prizes including a return airfare to Melbourne donated by Rex Airlines, a night's accommodation at The Old Woolstore in Hobart, and cruises on both the Tamar and Gordon Rivers. There were also various other prizes kindly donated by local businesses. We also had a lucky door prize of a 15min Helicopter ride courtesy of Osborne Helitours.

A great night was had by all and the Marrawah Brigade would like to acknowledge and thank the following businesses who helped make the night such a success: Robbie and Cindy Edwards of Cowbiz Stockfeeds, Westpac, Osborne Helitours, The Old Woolstore, Regional Express Airline, Gordon River Cruises, Tamar River Cruises, BP Service Station, MG Trading, Smithton Pharmacy, Bouldan Bay Oysters, Smithton Newsagency, WT House Betta Electrical, IGA Supermarket, Cottage Kitchen, Roberts Ltd, Cellarbrations Bottle Shop, Armour Hardware, Clarkson's Sports Store, Snipits Hairdresser's, Lizzie's This and That, Sadies Milkbar. **FG**

**'Our Volunteers are special people who give of their time, no questions asked.'**



A special mention must go to students of Redpa Primary School, whose artwork was reproduced on the dinner tables in the form of placements. The students' words and images are a strong reminder of the impact of the 2015/16 bushfire season on the communities of Circular Head.

# ARE YOU READY FOR WORK?

By Mike Cosgrove, Manager - Work Health and Safety  
People Support | Business and Executive Support




As a member of Tasmania Fire Service (TFS) you are required to regularly train, fine tune your skills and prepare for the dynamic and often unpredictable challenges for the Fire Season in Tasmania or where ever your skills may be needed.

**Whilst this training will prepare you to undertake work as a Firefighter, are you personally, *ready for Work?***

Safety is personal. If you get seriously injured you and your family are the ones impacted the most. Whilst TFS has clear legal work health and safety obligations to protect your health and safety at work where reasonably practicable, you also have a responsibility to ensure you are *ready for work*.

A range of factors will impact your readiness for work. The presence or absence of an individual factor will not in itself determine work readiness. A Self-Assessment Tool has been developed in New South Wales that you may be interested in.

This assessment tool provides you with 10 questions addressing key factors that are designed to assist you assess level of rest, medication, alcohol intake, life balance and alertness. You need to consider in your assessment if you can carry out your duties safely and if you need to discuss issues such as medication with your supervisor. You are the best judge of how tired you are and how it will affect your work.

**You are responsible for being *ready for work*. **

## 1 SLEEP

Have you had enough sleep to be able to do your job properly?

## 2 MEDICATION

Are you taking medication that can cause you to become tired or impair your ability to do your job?

## 3 ALCOHOL

Have you consumed alcohol before commencing work?

## 4 DIET

Are you eating a healthy selection of food?

## 5 LIFE BALANCE

Are you scheduling enough rest between work, any additional work and family/social commitments?

## 6 EXERCISE

Are you undertaking some form of exercise at least 3 times a week for a minimum of 30 minutes?

## 7 STRESS

Are you prioritising your work each shift to meet time frames and minimise stress?

## 8 WELLBEING

Are you coming to work while you are sick?

## 9 DRIVING/TRAVELLING

Are you alert enough to drive/travel safely?

## 10 WATER

Are you drinking the recommended 8 glasses of water each day?

If you have any questions regarding Work Readiness or you require Work Health and Safety Advice please do not hesitate to contact People Support on **6173 2478** during business hours.





Photo: Baz Ruddick

# INTERAGENCY TRAINING EXERCISE

Story by Karen Berwick of the Mersey SES Unit

Recently Mersey Unit SES was involved in an interagency exercise with TFS volunteer and career crews from Devonport and Sheffield, where a weatherboard house in Spreyton was set alight.

Mersey Unit's main role was to provide lighting, power and to give advice to the public.

Earlier in the evening we were fortunate enough to see inside the building and given a run through of how the exercise would evolve and the tasks set for TFS crews.

The first session involved smoke only being pumped into the building, followed by several fires ignited within the structure to enable TFS crews to practice using breathing apparatus, learn to read smoke layers, fire behavior within a structure and rescuing techniques needed to search for a 'trapped casualty'.

The house was then allowed to burn to the ground in a controlled environment.

Thank you to Dave Meldrum Acting District Officer – Operational Training, for initiating and running the exercise, which provided invaluable training for all concerned. **FG**

(Thanks to SES for permission to reproduce this article from *The Gazette of Summer 2016*)







# SES and TFS working even closer on the front line

Story by Gerald Van Rongen,  
SES Northern Regional Training Officer


The State Emergency Service and Tasmania Fire Service both have a responsibility for Road Crash Rescue in Tasmania, TFS in the urban areas and SES in the rural areas. Where these response areas overlap it is important that crews are aware of each other's capabilities and create a rapport with those members they could be working alongside of to save lives!

In the Northern Region, the Launceston Fire Brigade has visited all SES units that they share road crash rescue boundaries with, and have undertaken a combined training activity. Facilitated by the Northern Region SES Regional staff, crews have undertaken familiarisation of equipment stowed on each response vehicle, followed by a combined practical exercise.

Launceston Fire Brigade crews have visited the Northern Midlands SES unit located in Campbell Town, the Dorset SES Unit located in Scottsdale, the George Town SES Unit, and the Meander Valley SES Unit located in Deloraine. TFS staff ensured that each shift visited at least one SES unit.

It was observed that TFS and SES had a similar standard of response equipment, with much of the equipment being similar or identical. The TFS rescue truck was larger in size, with the downside to this being it was slower on the road.

It carries some specialised equipment that most SES trucks do not have, such as: low pressure airbags; bottle jacks; elevated work platform; and a lunar light. Other equipment carried by TFS rescue trucks is for Urban Search and Rescue operations. SES trucks had more modern hydraulic tools, some of them being battery operated. SES crews are now aware of what resources they can request during large scale road crashes. If SES and TFS crews respond to the same road crash, they are more familiar with each other's equipment and capabilities, which will result in better outcomes for their patients.

SES staff are very grateful that the Launceston Fire Brigade travelled to SES Units, eliminating travel time for SES volunteers who participated in these activities. There were many learnings for members from both services, and it is likely that these activities will be repeated biannually. 

(Thanks to SES for permission to reproduce this article from The Gazette of Summer 2016)





# State Fire Management Council

## Who is the State Fire Management Council?

The State Fire Management Council (SFMC) is an independently chaired body established under Section 14 of the Fire Service Act 1979.

Ian Sauer is currently Chair of the Council, and membership includes representatives from Tasmania Fire Service, Forestry Tasmania, Parks and Wildlife, Tasmanian Farmers' and Graziers Association, Forestry Industries Association of Tasmania and Local Government.

## What does SFMC do?

SFMC is responsible for developing a State vegetation fire management policy to be used as the basis for all fire management planning in Tasmania. This policy is in the process of being reviewed and has gone through an extensive consultation process with a very broad range of stakeholders. The policy is due for release by April 2017.

SFMC also advises and reports on matters relating to vegetation fire management, including prevention and mitigation, to both the Minister and the State Fire Commission.



Ian Sauer, State Fire Management Council (SFMC) Chair

They also oversee the Fire Management Area Committees for each Fire Management Area of Tasmania, and approve the final Fire Protection Plans.

Fire Management Area Committees (FMACs), or F-MACs as you may have heard them called, report to State Fire Management Council. There are 10 FMACs in Tasmania who are responsible for coordinating their local community fire management activities including community education and information and preparation of a Fire Protection Plan (FPP).

The Committees are made up of members who have a responsibility for, own or manage land within their Fire Management Area. This collaborative approach allows for tenure-blind identification of risk and shared responsibility in coordinating mitigation activities.

## What are Fire Protection Plans (FPPs)?

FPPs identify, assess and prioritise community bushfire-related risk, along with identifying strategic works to mitigate the risk. This may include planned burning activities or construction of fire breaks to help reduce the bushfire risk to the community in order to protect people, assets and other things of value to the community.

These plans are reviewed annually, and help to guide the implementation of the Fuel Reduction Program.

With local knowledge and stakeholder engagement being critical elements in effective emergency response, these plans also provide important information useful for incident management and response.

The plans include:

- community specific information on land tenure
- community assets
- local climate and vegetation
- bushfire history and risk analysis and
- identified community education programs and response plans for the area.

Fire Protection Plans are available on the SFMC website [www.sfmc.tas.gov.au](http://www.sfmc.tas.gov.au) or to TFS members on TFS Online, Operational Tools. **FG**

# Western Fire Management Area Committee

*Written by Julie Bernhagen,  
Chair Western Fire Management  
Area Committee*

## Who are you?

Julie Bernhagen

## What is your regular work?

My regular job is Executive Officer Strategy and Performance at Circular Head Council. I work within the Strategic Governance Department and provide administrative support in the areas of risk, business continuity, IT, information management and economic development. By far the most enjoyable and rewarding part of my job is in the emergency management space, as Deputy Municipal Emergency Management Coordinator. Circular Head Council recently joined with Waratah-Wynyard and Burnie Councils to form the Western Emergency Management Committee, and I am the current executive officer for that committee.

## What FMAC are you part of?

Circular Head Council is part of the Western FMAC, which also covers the municipalities of Burnie, Waratah-Wynyard, and West Coast.

## Who do you represent on this FMAC?

I represent Circular Head Council, and in doing so the people of Circular Head.

## What do you think the strengths of the FMAC are?

The Western FMAC has evolved over the past couple of years. In my opinion, the coming together of a variety of agencies, all with their unique angle and involvement in fire management has resulted in the viewing of fire risk from a more holistic perspective. What one agency perceives as a major risk maybe reassessed when compared with other regional risks.

To date the major focus of the FMACs has been to develop an annual Fire Protection Plan under the direction of Regional Planners from the Fuel Reduction Unit. Producing an overview of planned burns and mitigations would have been difficult without bringing all stakeholders together in the one group.

Overtime the networking at FMAC meetings has resulted in a more collaborative approach to burns and mitigation activities, for example scheduling neighbouring burns simultaneously.

The FMAC is also able to support actions by one agency and those within one municipal area. A good example of this would be formally supporting the Zeehan Bushfire Community Mitigation Plan. Increasingly FMAC members meet in other emergency and fire management forums, with the subsequent networking only increasing the capacity of the FMAC.




*Some of the Western FMAC members: Bill Walker (Waratah-Wynyard Council), Julie Bernhagen (Circular Head Council), Michael Foster (Burnie City Council), Tyron Clark (TFS), and Wayne Richards (SES)*

Recently the Western FMAC has found the direct contact to the State Fire Management Council helpful, as the FMAC harnesses a combined agency approach to lobbying for changes and improvements to fire management in the Western FMAC area.

## What are the benefits to the community from the work of the FMAC?

The crux of the Fire Protection Plans, produced by the FMACs, is community safety. The FMACs have assisted in identifying community assets, by using local knowledge and insight. It was a little disappointing that the Fire Protection Plans were not a helpful resource for background information during the January/February 2016 bushfires. Perhaps with some thought, and changes to the plans, the content may be of assistance in future fire events e.g. at risk communities and local information.

Up until recently the FMAC focus has been on risk, and collating agency information. With the maturing of FMACs there is a huge opportunity to use member connections to be a conduit to the community. A great example of this is supporting the work of the Community Development Officers. Suzette Harrison (CDO North West) is about to commence work in the Bushfire Ready Neighbourhoods program in the Cowrie Point – Rocky Cape area, and the FMAC will assist with promotion and most likely attend some of the meetings. The Western FMAC also identified the need for a Communications Plan for fire burns/events in the Arthur River area, and subsequently representatives of TFS, Parks and Council met to formulate a plan to keep the community better informed.

At the SFMC/FMAC meeting in August, some FMACs provided great examples of working in the public education space and introducing their communities to agencies working in fire management. Increasingly society will have to take ownership of fire risk, and the FMACs can play a role in improving the understanding of self-responsibility and the development of individual fire plans. Only by interacting with the community can the FMACs learn what is important to the people, and how best to support member agencies, and to communicate any messages. 

**Note: Western FMAC membership also includes representatives from Forico, Forestry Tasmania, Transend, TasWater, Cradle Coast NRM, West Coast Council, Parks, Aurora Energy, Hydro and TFS volunteers.**





## PHOTO COMP

**THE WINNER** of the Photo Competition for this issue is Trevor Kingston, Smithton Brigade Chief. Trevor's photo (shown above) depicts fire advancing from Sarah Anne Rocks, 27 January 2016. Volunteer brigades from Welsey Vale, Irishtown and Arthur River worked with shack owners to defend lives and property.

Well done to all our finalists.



1

2

3

## FINALISTS

(in no particular order)

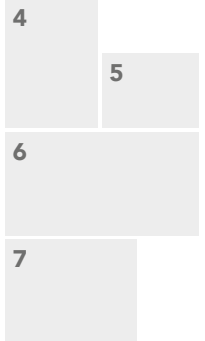
**1.** Mount George fires George Town December 2015. Photographer Belinda Taylor, volunteer firefighter Bell Bay Brigade

**2.** Volunteer firefighter Bradley Alexander at a hazard reduction burn, Claremont. Photographer Isaac Russell, volunteer firefighter Claremont Brigade

**3.** Volunteer firefighters Dave Stevenson (Margate Brigade) and Simon Deegan (Triabunna Brigade) – part of Southern Strike Team cleaning up at Nunamara fires January 2016. Photographer Melanie Beets, volunteer firefighter Margate Brigade)







**4.** Kingston Brigade volunteer firefighters protecting fire jumps at Salmon River Road January 2016. Photographer Dale Nicolson, Leading Firefighter (volunteer), Kingston Brigade

**5.** Fuel Reduction Burn, Wellington Park area, April 2016. Photographer Isaac Russell, volunteer Firefighter, Claremont Brigade

**6.** PWS rangers and TFS volunteer Phil Geard, Sandfly Brigade after a day's blacking out at Arthur River, January 2016. Photographer Charlie Biggins, Sandfly Brigade

**7.** Leading Firefighter Justin Smith Launceston Fire Brigade at Lake Mackenzie/Mole Creek bushfires January 2016 – waiting for the fire to reveal itself over the ridge. Photographer Scott Hunter, Firefighter, Launceston Fire Brigade



A big thank you to everyone who submitted photos for the competition. It was a difficult choice but the judges felt that the finalists really captured what TFS is all about, and our values of service, integrity, professionalism and consideration - as well as that feeling of being a 'firie'.

The winning photo was selected because it represents TFS in action, working with the community. The story behind the photo is also important, in that it shows a community that was able to defend their properties with our assistance because they were well prepared and had a plan.





TASMANIAN FIRE BRIGADES CHAMPIONSHIPS ASSOCIATION

# STATE FIREFIGHTER CHAMPIONSHIPS



**Your Brigade is invited to participate!**  
**Invermay Park, Launceston**  
**11-12 November 2017**

For more information go to [www.fire.tas.gov.au](http://www.fire.tas.gov.au) and click on Championships or email [championship@fire.tas.gov.au](mailto:championship@fire.tas.gov.au) or check us out on Facebook.

