



Scotland Island Rural Fire Brigade

Established 1955

Moving ahead in 2010

It's now been a month since the Annual General Meeting of the Brigade. Congratulations to those members elected to field officer and brigade roles

Your operations team of myself, Senior Deputy Captain Graeme Richmond, Deputy Captains Ian White, John Christie and Simon Lambe, and training officer John Marshall have been working on plans for the coming year.

We are working on a calendar for training for the next 12 months and have planned to conduct several pile burns in coming weeks and months.

We are looking to make training more exciting and utilise more scenario-based exercises to reinforce our basic skills and develop further skills for fighting house and other structure fires, boat fires, motor vehicle accidents (don't laugh, I've attended two MVAs on the Island as a Brigade member), transferring sick and injured people off the Island, and a lot more.

We held a joint training session on 4 April with members from the West Pittwater Brigade with 20 members from the two brigades using the Scotland Island 15 to pump water to the top of the Island through the pipe located at Cargo Wharf while conducting a series of scenarios up the line using Scotland Island 7 and 9.

More joint training exercises are planned.

Flexible Training

As part of a plan to ensure as many people have the opportunity to train, we are taking a fresh look at how our training is being delivered.

We are planning to hold regular Brigade training on the first Sunday of each month. "Crew" training will be held on the third Sunday of each month and mid-week training will be held on the Third Thursday of each month.

Please don't think you have to attend all these training sessions. What we are hoping to achieve is a flexibility in the delivery of training on the Island, so that those who are unable to make one training session have an option for another.

The idea is that the Brigade training session will be used to reinforce the basic skills and knowledge needed to fight fires in a variety of situations, from bush fires to house fires, boat fires, etc.

The Crew training session will be used to take those basics skills and test them further with different scenarios.

The **Mid-week** session will be used to cover a variety of topics like communications, first aid, fire extinguishers and the like. It will also be used to run nighttime scenarios for both bush fire fighting and house/structure/boat fires.

So, for **May** we will be conducting training on 2 May. It will be a "respond to and extinguish" bush fire scenario, using SI 7 and 9, and then fight a fire using portable pumps.

On May 16, Crew training day, we are hoping to conduct pile burns on the lower part of Pathilda Reserve, putting into practice the skills we will have practiced the fortnight before. It is planned to invite West Pittwater Brigade to that burn and we will use the two boats – *yes we'll get a change to see the new Elvina 15 in operation* – as well as SI7, SI9 the trailer and the PC.

If the weather has been wet and we are unable to burn Pathilda Reserve, then Crew Training will look at the scenarios practiced at Brigade training and take them to a more difficult level.

In terms of **other hazard reduction burns**, we are still to complete the burn on the Thompson Street walking track, near Fitzpatrick Street, and there are some piles in the top section of Elsie Street, adjoining Elizabeth Park, that need to be burned. More on those later.

On Thursday 20 May we will conduct **First Aid training at the Station**, looking at the operations of the Brigades' Defibrillator. This first aid refresher training and training in the use of the defib will be useful in the lead up to members undertaking Community First Responders training with the NSW Ambulance Service.

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This training will see a number of brigade members trained by NSW Ambulance to respond to medical emergencies. We are still to get full details for the training and when it will be held, but I'll keep you informed.

In **June** the focus will switch to village fire fighting with the June 6 training session looking at the fundamentals of **responding to a building alight**. We will use the community hall in Catherine Park to practice responding to such an emergency.

On June 20 we will have a scenario where the crew has to "respond" to a house alight somewhere on the Island and then on June 24, we will respond to a **house alight at night**, using the portable lighting system and going through the process of having to roll out hoses in the dark.

A full year's training calendar is being prepared and it will be posted on the Brigade's web site.

Maintaining skills

I would urge those members who have not been to a training session in recent times to try and make some time available during the next two months to join in with the current program.

With three sessions available each month, most members should be able to find some time to join us and increase your skills.

The Brigade is keen to see as many active members maintain their active status.

But remember, if there is a fire, and there is an emergency, we need as many trained and competent members as possible to deal with the situation. We don't want to find ourselves in the position where people attend the Fire Station to help but are not able to be deployed because they have not been maintaining their skills and knowledge. The officers will have a duty of care to their crew members, and if any of us think a particular member is not fully skilled to deal with an emergency situation, they will not be able to attend the fireground.

New Members

I am pleased to see Wayne Gluyas is about to start his Basic Fire Fighter course. Wayne has undertaken his pre-course training and will be attending the Basic course at Terry Hills in May. The course has been shortened to just three days and then an assessment, with more post-course activities being undertaken at a Brigade level, before the assessment day.

I'd also like to welcome Lauren Byrne (yes, my daughter) as a probationary member. Lauren has started her pre-course training and it is hoped she will undertake the Basic Fire fighter course later this year.

If any one knows any Island residents who would be good brigade members – active or non-active – ask them to contact the Brigade to discuss how they can be involved. We are always on the look out for more members.

Further Training

I would also like current active members to consider undertaking further training at the district office, particularly the Village Fire Fighter Course and the Advanced Fire Fighter Course.

Contact me or John Marshall to discuss any district-based courses you are interested in.

Remember, we're it when (no, if) a fire starts on the Island. The more trained and competent people we have on the Island, the safer we will *all* be.

Hope to see you at the training sessions and/or hazard reduction burns.

Cheers

Tim Byrne

Captain

SIRFB

28 April, 2010