



December 2017

HOT TOPICS

Celebrating our network

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Greetings to all of our bushfire brigade volunteers and families.

What a year 2017 was, I am now officially past my one year anniversary as the Executive Director of Bushfires NT. My first few months in this role was a huge learning curve and to be honest I would say I am still on it, not sure when this curve actually ends!

We have experienced our first Top End fire season under the new *Bushfires Management Act* and as expected there have been some hiccups and frustration as we tackled with new processes in line with the legislation. Overall these were quite minor and hopefully easily rectified. I would like to express my thanks to everyone for their understanding and willingness to embrace the changes the new legislation has brought.

Change is a big topic at the moment for Bushfires NT and volunteer bushfire brigades as the long awaited Bushfires Emergency Management System (BEMS) is rolled out across the Territory. This system will be a watershed moment in moving the way we do business from the reporting of the provision of permits, planned burns and responding to fires. Steele Davis will be available to assist Brigades with navigating the system as it becomes available, his contact details are included in the BEMS update further on in this edition.

I would like to thank all of the volunteers and brigades for their assistance during 2017, your dedication and enthusiasm in reducing the risk of fire in your local community has been simply amazing and well recognised by Government Ministers, other agencies and the public.

The attention on the fire weather conditions has moved from the Top End to the Alice Springs and Barkly regions.

A special thanks to those Alice Springs volunteers and regional staff who assist in the Top End when required, if necessary we will implement a similar arrangement for the Southern Region.

From all of the us at Bushfires NT we wish all of our Brigades and their members and families a Merry Christmas and safe New Year.

Here's hoping for a 'damp' (not too wet) but fire free festive season and I look forward to catching up with you during 2018.

Sincerely,

Collene Bremner

INTERNATIONAL VOLUNTEER DAY CELEBRATIONS



Bushfires NT staff and volunteers recently attended events in both Darwin and Alice Springs to celebrate International Volunteer Day with Volunteering NT.

International Volunteer Day is celebrated worldwide on 5 December in recognition of the positive solidarity of volunteers around the world, who help out in times of crisis, helping to save lives, and supporting those who want to continue living their lives with dignity.

Bushfires NT volunteers were able to snag a few door prizes at the event.

Well done to Dave from Labasheeda Park and James from BART for winning some great prizes.



VISIT FROM INDONESIA

Bushfires NT and the Livingstone Volunteer Bushfire Brigade have helped host 25 Indonesian visitors doing an Integrated Fire Management Course, sponsored by the Australia Awards.

These visitors are from Indonesian Government ministries and authorities responsible for managing fire and disasters.



Bushfires NT staff and Dean McManamy, from Livingstone Volunteer Bushfire Brigade, explained the roles and responsibilities of all the players in bushfire management, and how operations work in the Northern Territory.

The group spent the next week in South Australia where they learnt about the different approach used by the SA Country Fire Service.



BUSHFIRES EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM UPDATE

Type	Permit No.	Expiry Date	Submitted To	Reason for Burn	Location	Status	View
Planned Burn	00034	16/12/2017 14:00:00	09/12/2017 11:00:00	Land Management	140	Approved	Planned Burn Detail
Planned Burn	00033	01/06/2018 13:00:00	01/06/2018 13:00:00	Waste Management - Fire Issue	Indroona Creek	Approved	Planned Burn Detail
Permit	00034	02/12/2017 00:00:00	09/12/2017 00:00:00	Fire Management	1059 Ducks Road	Approved	Permit Detail
Permit	00034	01/12/2017 00:00:00	09/12/2017 00:00:00	Fire Management - Fire Origin	1059 Ducks Road	Approved	Permit Detail
Planned Burn	00030	01/06/2018 12:00:00	16/12/2017 10:10:00	Fire Management	Archer Highway	Approved	Planned Burn Detail
Permit	00032			Fire Management	1061-1000 Assorted Drive	Not Approved	Permit Detail

Bushfires Emergency Management System (BEMS) has been deployed onto the Test Server. It is currently being tested by staff and several volunteers for functionality and to ensure it meets its scoped specifications being; user friendly, functional, is reflective of our duties and responsibilities under the Bushfires Management Act, Chief Fire Control Officers Standing Orders and Standard Operating Procedures.

The roll out of BEMS will occur in 2018 once the training package is approved and hardware set-up. More information on BEMS will become available in the coming months, keep an eye on Hot Topics or contact Steele (8999 2032) for more information.

Finally, December 15th will be Miriam's last day with Bushfires NT. We would like to thank Miriam for all her hard work, dedication and steely resolve to complete the Project on time. Her friendly and supportive nature will be missed at the Darwin Office.

All the best with what is to come!

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

GAMBA ACTION Program

GET YOUR FREE HERBICIDE & SPRAY EQUIPMENT LOANS AT:

- Freds Pass Sport and Recreation Reserve
Bees Creek - 0427 272 586
- Katherine Weed Management Depot
13 Crawford Street - 8973 8835
- Coomalie Community Government Council
Batchelor - 8976 0058
- Bushfires NT, Batchelor - 8976 0098
- Territory Wildlife Park
Berry Springs - 0401 114 912
(please ring in advance)
- Beatrice Hill Volunteer Fire Brigade
0457 212 309
- Dundee, Paul Brown - 8978 2107
- Wagait Shire Council, Garry - 0427 133 959
- Milne Volunteer Fire - 8977 9041

For more information, contact the Weed Management Branch
Ph: 8999 4567
Email: weedinfo@nt.gov.au
www.nt.gov.au/gamba

You must control gamba grass while green. Prevent gamba grass fires from destroying lives and properties.

YOUR GAMBA, YOUR PROPERTY, YOUR RISK



THANK YOU VOLUNTEER CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

The Bushfires NT Volunteer Consultative Committee (VCC) is a forum for representatives of our volunteer network to advise Bushfires NT on strategic direction and policy relating to volunteer programs.

After a 2 year appointment, the current members of the VCC met recently for the final time. The meeting served as a good opportunity to finally present, the Volunteering NT Corporate Volunteer Team of the Year award to the whole group.

Each member of the VCC has sacrificed countless hours as a volunteer member of a Volunteer Bushfires Brigades, in addition to the great commitment required by the Committee itself.

The VCC has reached several milestones over the past 2 years. However, its greatest achievement is its participation in the development of a new set of bushfires legislation, the *Bushfires Management Act*.

Bushfires NT would like to thank the VCC for their effort towards improving the way we do business. Thank you.

Nominations to take part in the new VCC for a 2 year term until 2020 will open in the New Year.



POINT STUART UNVEILS NEW HEADQUARTERS



Point Stuart Volunteer Bushfire Brigade recently celebrated the opening of their brigade headquarters with a barbeque and ribbon-cutting ceremony.

Captain of Point Stuart Brigade, Adrian, officially opened the headquarters by unveiling a plaque dedicating the structure to local community icon, Terry Baldwin.

The occasion also allowed Bushfires NT Executive Director, Collene Bremner, to award Point Stuart Brigade with the Most Progressive Volunteer Bushfire Brigade award for 2017.

The brigade is responsible for managing a large area, and has been integral in the development of a whole of community approach to land management.

Congratulations Point Stuart Volunteer Bushfire Brigade!



THANKING SAVANNA REGION VOLUNTEERS



A volunteer appreciation event was recently held in Katherine to thank Bushfires NT volunteers in the Savanna region.

Volunteers and family from Katherine and Edith Farms Volunteer Bushfires Brigades met on Friday, 1 December to celebrate a successful year. The event served as an opportunity for staff to volunteer their time to thank volunteers for their ongoing efforts.

Thank you to all of our volunteers in the Savanna Region for another great season.



HOW ARE YOU AT SHARING?

Since March, Bushfires NT has published well over 300 social media posts (Facebook and Twitter). This is on average more than 1 per day.

The Bushfires NT Facebook page continues to grow, with our following more than doubling over the last 9 months.

There has been close to 200 Facebook posts in this time (about 5 per week) with the average posts receiving 1000-1500 views. During the busier months (July-September) posts views were as high as 100,000, which shows there is a real interest in the work of Bushfires NT.

There is still a lot to be done in this space to increase public awareness. In fact, there is something very simple that you can do to help. If you haven't already, get on to www.facebook.com/BushfiresNT and like or share some of posts. By doing this it creates more exposure for Bushfires NT by sharing our information/stories on your newsfeed.

This provides Bushfires with a greater opportunity to access more of the community, and keep people up-to-date with important bushfire safety information.

Please get in touch with lucas.fiddaman@nt.gov.au if you have any questions about liking or sharing our Facebook page.



PLANNING FOR 2018

Community Engagement Officer, Lucas, is currently establishing an engagement calendar, including important dates and key events for Bushfires NT in 2018.

By knowing these dates, it is hoped that it will make it easier to assist you plan, promote and resource for important occasions throughout the year.

This will also allow for the development of a more tailored approach to volunteer/brigade support that will (hopefully) reflect the needs of each brigade.

To assist in the preparation of the 2018 Engagement Calendar, it would be great if you could provide the brigade information/dates you think are important to lucas.fiddaman@nt.gov.au





volunteering nt

Leading volunteering in the Northern Territory

2018 Training & Events Calendar

Date	Time	Location	Topic	Cost
Tuesday, 6 February 2018	10.00am - 12.00pm	Darwin	Training: Finding New Volunteers Explore your membership, plan for the future & discuss ways to approach new people to join.	FREE training VNT Members \$22 Non Members
Wednesday, 14 February 2018	10.00am - 12.00pm	Alice Springs	Training: Finding New Volunteers Explore your membership, plan for the future & discuss ways to approach new people to join.	FREE training VNT Members \$22 Non Members
Wednesday, 7 March 2018	10.00am - 12.00pm	Darwin	Volunteer Managers Network Meeting	Open to all Volunteer Managers & Coordinators
Thursday, 15 March 2018	10.00am - 1.00pm	Tennant Creek	Training & Networking: Building Conflict Resolution Skills. 3 hour interactive session examining the role of communication in managing conflict & identifying situations	\$44.00 VNT Members \$55.00 Non Members
Tuesday, 27 March 2018	10.00am - 12.00pm	Katherine	Training & Networking: Volunteer Management 101 - The Essentials Supporting new volunteer managers to develop their management skills, and to understand motivations of volunteers and principles	FREE training VNT Members \$22 Non Members
Wednesday, 4 April 2018	9.00am - 1.00pm	Alice Springs	National Standards Workshop Prepare for and plan the implementation of the National Standards	\$77 VNT Members \$88 Non Members
Tuesday, 10 April 2018	9.00am - 1.00pm	Darwin	National Standards Workshop Prepare for and plan the implementation of the National Standards	\$77 VNT Members \$88 Non Members
Wednesday, 2 May 2018	10.00am - 12.00pm	Darwin	Volunteer Managers Network Meeting	Open to all Volunteer Managers & Coordinators
21-27 May 2018		All	National Volunteer Week	
Thursday, 7 June 2018	10.00am - 12.00pm	Katherine	Training & Networking: Finding New Volunteers Explore your membership, plan for the future & discuss ways to approach new people to join.	FREE training VNT Members \$22 Non Members
Wednesday, 20 June 2018	10.00am - 12.00pm	Tennant Creek	Training & Networking: Grant Writing for Beginners Finding the right grant, identify your project scope, learn grant application writing	FREE training VNT Members \$22 Non Members
November 2018 - date TBC			 NT Volunteer of the Year Awards	
Wednesday, 5 December 2018			International Volunteer Day	

CHRISTMAS WITH COX PENINSULA VBB



Cox Pen VBB have made Christmas a little more special for the kids (some a little bigger than others) of the Wagait community.

Ray and other members of the brigade donated some time to help the Country Club with their Christmas celebrations.

As you can see from the photos, it looks like the big kids got in first to get the best gifts.



ACACIA HILLS CELEBRATES THE TRIPLE S (SWINE, SHELTERS & SANTAS)



AHVBB held a combined event on their First Friday of the month event.

This time it was their Christmas party along with a pig-on-a-spit as a major event of opening their Caretaker's shelter which was funded by the DREVF.

A good turnout saw more new community members engaged in the monthly fun as well as many positive comments in relation to the pig which was donated by M&J Builders.

A big thanks to Mick and his crew for the shed, and a special thanks to their staff member Ron (Chef), who did an excellent professional job with the pig.

A big thank you to DREVF too for the provision of funding for the shelter.

LIVINGSTONE CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS IN STYLE

Livingstone VBB recently had a visit from Santa in time for their Christmas show.

The evening was very well attended by members, locals, and 'blow-ins' (like myself), and was a great opportunity for Captain of Livingstone, Dean, to thank members for their support and recognise a certain few for their amazing efforts.

Charlie Gimbel was fortunate enough to receive two awards. His first award recognises Charlie for all the work he put-in over the year, while the second was not so gratuitous. Charlie was also awarded for the brigade's biggest stuff-up for the year.

Dave Burnip and Max Kennon were also recognised for their 39 year service. Both Dave and Max were two of Livingstone's founding members of the brigade, and have overseen a great deal of change throughout the evolution of the brigade.

They have been fighting fires and protecting their community longer than I have been alive. Incredible!



FROM KATHERINE VBB



This is “hello to all” and a brief look along the track around Katherine.

Katherine Volunteer Bushfire Brigade has been fairly busy during *The Dry* with roadside burns, private controlled burns and the usual wild fires often due to carelessness; although, we have also had an arsonist this year; this is unusual for Katherine.

Getting adjusted to the ABV, or not, has had its moments as some of our previous and handy fire fighters seem to be a bit shy of paperwork. However, despite the ‘hoops’ and expectations one goes through these days before even experiencing a real fire, we are signing up a steady flow of bodies. We expect 2018 should be quite refreshing but possibly challenging! **Special thanks to Wendy for getting new members fired up with FF1 NT.**

Meanwhile those of ABV status held the show together this year, along with the support on wildfire from our Bushfires NT blokes. We find it very beneficial having Edith Farms Brigade nearby so we are pretty good at ‘throwing our hats in together’ for best effect.

Just as we are thinking we’ve got the measure of things we get hit with BEMS! Interestingly, it seems to be us older members most keen to give it a go at this stage, (or perhaps we appreciate we are likely to be the most IT illiterate.) If we get to savvy the IT and it all results in less paperwork and easier communication, we should be in front.

Katherine district has received scattered storms and a few lightning strike fires but it is always a joy to see the country greening up - pressure down!

One could say ‘it’s their job’ but either way we thank our local RFCO’s for their leadership at the fire front, finding tolerance while under certain stress and mostly for continually treating us with dignity, regardless! Thanks blokes.

Our esteemed Director, Collene, travelled to Katherine on 1st Dec, along with several others, to attend the Volunteer Thank You Party.

Collene must have received many admiring comments as she ‘swan-ed’ around in her alluring red apron. A cryptic slogan, ‘some “thing” ‘ adorned the apron; a great sign of a woman with a sense of humour.

But now an enigma surrounds that apron! How did it end up hanging off the KVBB whiteboard?

To all volunteer, have a deserved fire break, enjoy *The Wet* and the very best for 2018.

Cheers from KVBB



BYNOE HAVEN BUSH TELEGRAPH

The newsletter of the Milne Volunteer Bushfire Brigade

December 2017



MVBB ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Milne Volunteer Bushfire Brigade's Annual General Meeting was held on Saturday 2nd December. Thanks to all those who participated.



Lee Humphris attended from Bushfires NT and conducted the election of office bearers. All members of the committee were re-elected.

Captain	Sue Jones
Deputy Captain	Tommy Abdoo
Treasurer	Vicki Stokes
Secretary	Gary Swanson
Public Officer	Kath Phelan
Committee	Ross Koop, Ian Tibbits, John Rogers, Wayne Plume.

Lee spoke about a *Bushfire Emergency Incidents Management System* that Bushfires NT is currently developing. It will contain layers of information supported by a mapping system that volunteers will be able to access through a portal. It will be able to provide incident reports that reduce the paperwork required. Milne Brigade will partner with Dundee for the training.

The Captain thanked Lee for her ongoing help and support.

Captain's Report 2017

We had a big wet season therefore lots of fuel throughout the area, some of the fire breaks could not be cut as it was too wet to get to them until later in the year. Most of our mitigation burns were done early but we still had 3 wildfires. 2 were contained without any loss of property but unfortunately 1 wildfire there was considerable loss of property but no injuries. We would not have been so successful without the help and support from Dundee VBB, the community and Bushfires NT.

We held a very successful fund raiser midway through the season which enabled us to purchase hand held radio's for active members to help keep them safe.

Thank you to everybody who was involved whether it was fighting fires, cleaning and maintaining vehicles, keeping the shed neat and tidy or the many little things that keep us functioning.

Wish you all a safe, happy and prosperous Christmas and New Year.

Susan Jones

Our Helipad

During the year our helipad had its first use for an emergency. It is a community asset which the MVBB continues to maintain and improve.



The New Windsock

Treasurer's Report 2017

The Mine Volunteer Bushfire Brigade Incorporated Financial Statements for the year ended 30 September 2017 were emailed to members on 18 November 2017. A summary of the Brigade's cash position at the start and end of the financial year is included below.

Cash Position 30 September 2016
TOTAL CASH RESERVES \$32,981.10

Cash Position 30 September 2017
TOTAL CASH RESERVES \$67,034

I am pleased to report that the Management Committee has maintained an active and prudent approach to managing the Brigade's finances so that we ended the year with a total equity of \$138,208 with a decrease in assets of \$13,891 over the year. The net loss for the year was mainly derived from depreciation of \$32,281 for all our assets. Our total cash reserves of \$67,034 leave us well prepared to manage until we receive our 2017 Operational Grant.

Over the year the Management Committee received requests to purchase various items of new equipment for the Brigade, as well as paying for maintenance and repairs for existing equipment. All requests were met without adversely affecting our cash position.

I thank the Management Committee for their constructive approach to our Brigade finances over the 2016-2017 financial year, and look forward to another positive year supporting our volunteer fire fighters.

Victor Staines



Illuminated dust suppression around the helipad

TA MUCHLY

Thanks are due to the Member for Lingjari, *the Hon Warren Snowden MP*, who helped us secure funding to undertake dust suppression around the helipad. This will provide improved safety for any helicopter landing in dry and dusty conditions.

Our Christmas Party



Thanks are also due to all those who were involved in the preparation, food service and clean up involved in the Brigade's Christmas Party, which followed the AGM.

Particular thanks are due and were expressed at the AGM to Noeleene Tibbits who took charge of the menu and food preparation and to her helpers. The feast was exceptional and a credit to all those who helped.

Special thanks are also due to Tommy and Julie Abdo who donated the prawns and arranged the liquid refreshments. The Brigade appreciates Sandpalms' ongoing support.



In view of the heat and humidity many of the Brigade's *old dogs* enjoyed the refreshments provided.

