



NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

MALUA BAY RURAL FIRE BRIGADE ANNUAL NEWSLETTER BUSHFIRE SEASON 2022 – 2023

CAPTAIN'S MESSAGE

Another La Nina and wet bushfire season have resulted in a quiet year for the brigade. Despite this, we have been actively training and preparing for more challenging seasons, which are undoubtedly heading our way. Recent advice from the Bureau of Meteorology suggests that the current run of La Nina seasons will likely be followed by neutral conditions and a run of El Nino influenced seasons – resulting in heightened fire danger.

When it comes to fire safety, there is no room for complacency. It is worth noting that it is unlikely that the recently burnt areas around Malua Bay will provide the same protection people can usually rely upon when a prescribed burn reduces the hazard. This is because a prescribed burn is conducted at much lower temperatures, and the forest crown is unaffected. When the crown is damaged or destroyed, as it was on New Year's Eve 2019, the growth of the understory plants is much more prolific, and the build-up of fire fuels occurs more quickly. Another advantage of the reduction of fuels through prescribed burns is that most of the areas treated by the brigade before the 2019-20 fires did not suffer from a crowning fire resulting in easier control, less damage, and less understory growth. Begin your preparations now by maintaining Asset Protection Zones, cleaning gutters, and preparing survival plans, amongst other measures promoted here and on the RFS website.

The brigade has also been busy mapping fire trails and access routes we would likely rely on during a fire and for hazard reductions. Two members in particular, John Raymond and Pat Harris, deserve the community's thanks and congratulations for this work. Both these members played a critical firefighting role during the fires but have since ceased operational duties. This exemplifies that not all our roles involve active firefighting and that volunteers in other areas can undertake vital work. Please contact us if you would like to volunteer in many of the varied and valuable roles we offer.

As always, our members are grateful to community members who have contributed financially to the brigade. These funds have increased our capacity in many areas throughout the year, and it would be a much-reduced service in their absence.

On behalf of the brigade, I wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. Please drop in and say hello during the combined Batemans Bay Surf Club and Malua Bay RFS Brigade complimentary breakfast and coffee at Malua Bay Beach on 31 December.



Berkeley Braham



TIME TO GET READY FOR THE NEXT BUSH FIRE SEASON

The Bushfire Danger Period is from 1 September to 31 March.
No fires can be lit in the Eurobodalla Council District without a permit.

PREPARE YOUR PROPERTY

- Clear debris from your roof and gutters and excess garden material such as overhanging shrubs and woodchips from the walls of your house.
- Replace missing roof parts, fit metal gutter guard and block openings into your roof space.
- Enclose under floor areas, remove combustible materials such as firewood and keep lawn areas trimmed.
- Store flammable items and firewood away from the house.
- Consider metal fly wire screens on window openings.
- A solid high boundary fence, preferably non-combustible, reduces radiant heat.
- Ensure the pressure relief valve on LPG cylinders face outward.
- If you have a large water tank, dam or swimming pool, consider installing a Static Water Supply (SWS) sign.

MAKE A PLAN

- **Leaving early is the safest option**
 - Decide when to leave.
 - Decide what to take
 - Decide where to go and how to get there
 - Decide how to communicate.
- **Stay, but only if you are well prepared**
 - You have the right equipment
 - Decide where to shelter when the fire front arrives
 - Be ready to extinguish spot fires after the fire front passes
 - Ensure everyone knows what to do
 - Have an emergency back-up plan
- **Know**
 - The new Australian Fire Danger Rating System
 - Neighbourhood Safer Places, e.g., the Malua Bay Beach Reserve
 - **Fires Near Me** phone app
 - Phone numbers, Radio frequencies and emergency website such as <https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/>

NEW FIRE DANGER RATINGS ARE NOW SIMPLER AND GIVE YOU CLEAR ACTIONS TO TAKE.

Fire Danger Ratings describe the potential level of danger should a bush fire start. The new Australian Fire Danger Rating System has been developed

using the latest science to be more accurate and relevant to where you live. Each level has clear calls to action to make it easier for people to know what to do.

The new system will be used across Australia, so whether you are at home or travelling, you will see the same system being used. It has four levels – **Moderate, High, Extreme, and Catastrophic**. Each level has clear calls to action to make it easier for people to know what to do.



Key to Fire Danger Ratings



NO RATING

No rating issued

MODERATE

Plan and prepare

HIGH

Be ready to act

EXTREME

Take action now to protect your life and property

CATASTROPHIC

For your survival, leave bush fire risk areas



Total Fire Ban – There is total fire ban in place

VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS WANTED

Our members are volunteers who bring a broad range of knowledge and experience to the team, creating a pool of talent, strength, and diversity.

We are always ready to welcome more volunteers to join our brigade. Not everyone wants to climb onto a fire truck, but there are other important roles to fill.



APPLICATION

Go to the RFS website <https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/volunteer/join-the-nsw-rfs> to apply online or use the brigade contact details given at the end of this Newsletter.

COMMITMENT

You determine your level of involvement. However, as an operational member, you will need to undertake training to gain nationally recognised qualifications. Training is held on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of the month. Meetings are held on the 1st Tuesday. You should be prepared to respond to emergency callouts with reasonable regularity.

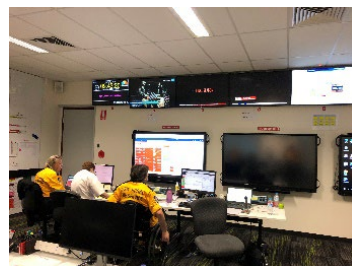
OUT-OF-AREA DEPLOYMENT

During the year, some of our members joined Far South Coast Strike Teams to assist in the recovery and clean-up of regions savagely hit by flooding, especially in the Northern Rivers district (Lismore) of NSW.



Members worked with other brigades to collect and remove water-ruined items, wash out homes, public facilities, and businesses, and to provide support to affected householders.

One of our members worked in the Operations Control Centre in Casino, undertaking communications for both ground and arial work, logistics and planning.



Each of the Out-of-area deployments lasted from 5 to 7 days.



AWARDS AND CELEBRATION OF ACHIEVEMENTS

During the year, brigade members received prestigious awards for service to the RFS. These awards were for Long Service, for National Medals, and for National Emergency Medals. The brigade celebrated these achievements with the "Phoenix" Party.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The brigade will continue with the tradition of doing a **Santa Run** on Christmas Eve. This is one of our favourite engagements with the community, witnessing the joy-filled faces of the young ones.

We also combine with the Batemans Bay Surf Life Saving Club to hold events at the Malua Bay Beach. Come to meet with us there on the morning of New Years Eve for a breakfast BBQ.



The Malua Bay Rural Fire Brigade's mission is to protect you, your family, and your property from fire. We always appreciate your continuing support in helping us meet this objective.

We are an "urban interface" brigade made up of dedicated local volunteers who respond to emergencies particularly in Lilli Pilli, Malua Bay, Rosedale, Guerilla Bay, Woodlands, and surrounding areas.

Outside the summer fire season, we help reduce the intensity of bush fires by conducting targeted hazard reduction burns. Our volunteers attend training all year round to ensure that we are skilled and equipped to tackle bush fires, house fires, and motor vehicle accidents as well as assist other emergency services.

Other hazard reduction and operational support activities include assisting property owners with pile burns, vegetation clearing, upgrades to our station and trail mapping for our area of operations.

Members of the Malua Bay Rural Fire Brigade form a team of hard-working, professional, and dedicated volunteers who are committed to giving back to our local community.

Voluntary financial contributions for improving the brigade's equipment are the fairest method of raising funds for your local brigade and are always welcome. We appreciate receiving whatever amount you can comfortably offer.

Your donation enables the Malua Bay Brigade to continue to grow, maintain and improve our assets so that we are better equipped to protect you, your family, and your assets.

We encourage donations to be made by Bank Transfer to our Malua Bay Fire Rural Brigade account **BSB 062-650**, Account Number **00900077**, or deposited at a Commonwealth Bank branch. Donations by cheque can be posted to our P O Box 2040, Malua Bay 2536.

If you require a receipt, please send us an email maluabayrfsbrigade@gmail.com with information about your donation.



CONTACT US

- PO Box 2040, Malua Bay, NSW 2536
- Email: maluabayrfsbrigade@gmail.com
- Brigade Website: www.maluabayrfs.com
- Brigade Facebook Page: www.facebook.com/maluabayruralfirebrigade
- Captain: Berkeley Braham, 0427 361 889
- Secretary: Greg Shaw, 0412 180 513
- Treasurer: Michael Lane, 0438 61 51 61
- Station Location: Top of Reservoir Road, Malua Bay