



NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE

## MALUA BAY RURAL FIRE BRIGADE ANNUAL NEWSLETTER BUSHFIRE SEASON 2023 – 2024

The Malua Bay Rural Fire Brigade's members are all volunteers, operating under NSWRFSS, protecting the coastal urban communities of Lilli Pilli, Malua Bay, Rosedale and Guerilla Bay, and other rural residential areas along Burri Road, Ridge Road, and Dunns Creek Road in the Eurobodalla on the Far South Coast of NSW



### CAPTAIN'S MESSAGE



After three wet years, we expect a drier-than-usual summer. This means heightened bushfire risk. While the 2019/2020 fires reduced fuel loads, they also saw the obliteration of the forest canopy, allowing for prolific understory growth, providing ample fine fuels for dangerous fires on hot, windy days. Uncontrolled, high-intensity fires should not be confused with controlled, low-intensity hazard reduction burns when it comes to bushfire protection due to this loss of canopy and understory growth.

Unfortunately, the regulatory framework surrounding bushfire mitigation is difficult to navigate and not fit for purpose. Likewise, a new approach to bushfire risk management planning confuses strategic and operational matters, incorrectly interprets the Rural Fire Services Act and is unlikely to make our district any safer during bad fire seasons.

Exacerbating this is a fire-trails program that has run out of money.

What does this mean if you live or own property here? Simple – there is no room for complacency. Prepare your property and bushfire survival plans. What does it mean for us as a brigade? More training, more callouts and hopefully more members. So, if you want to do something for your community, please get in touch.

### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The brigade will continue with the tradition of doing a **Santa Run** on Christmas Eve starting about 3 pm. The Santa Run is one of our favourite engagements with the community, witnessing the joy-filled faces of the young ones receiving some “goodies” from Santa and the assisting elves.

Another Community Event is the breakfast BBQ at the Malua Bay Beach near the Surf Club on the **morning** of New Years Eve. Come to meet with us there for a friendly chat and get answers to your questions about staying safe. The kiddies love to climb into the Fire Trucks.



## TIME TO GET READY FOR THE NEXT BUSH FIRE SEASON

The Bushfire Danger Period is from 1 September to 31 March.

### 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.

### 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
  - **Hazards Near Me** phone app (it used to be called *Fires Near Me*).

In storms, fires and floods, your phone, internet, or power may go down, so it's a good idea to use a portable battery-operated radio. Listen to your local ABC Radio for updates and advice.



### Key to Fire Danger Ratings

	<b>NO RATING</b>	No rating issued
	<b>MODERATE</b>	Plan and prepare
	<b>HIGH</b>	Be ready to act
	<b>EXTREME</b>	Take action now to protect your life and property
	<b>CATASTROPHIC</b>	For your survival, leave bush fire risk areas

## VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS WANTED

Are you ready to be effective on your community? Become a NSW RFS volunteer.

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 besides firefighting.

- Community engagement
- Logistics
- Catering
- Social Media
- Administration
- Information technology



### 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 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesdays of the month. Meetings are held on the 1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday. You need to be prepared to respond to emergency callouts with reasonable regularity.

### FIRE TRAILS & STATIC WATER SOURCES

The western side of our brigade area consists mainly of State Forest and occupied rural blocks. As part of the brigade ensuring its operational readiness, we have been working on the fire trails in our area, mapping them, maintaining their usability, and conducting training exercises on them.



This western area does not have a town water supply for trucks to tap into using fire hydrants, so we are recording the location and access routes to Static Water Sources (SWS) where the property owner agrees to make this water available for firefighting operations. These consist of dams, storage tanks and swimming pools.

If you would like to participate in these preparations, contact John Raymond on 0407 667 691.

### COOLAGOLITE FIRE

The Coolagalite fire in the Bega Valley LGA started late on the morning of 3 October.

Malua Bay sent members to provide:

- 8 crews for day and night shifts,
- 1 specialist Fireline Tree Feller for 3 shifts,
- 1 DIVCOM and a Scribe for 2 shifts,
- A Section Leader for 2 shifts,
- 2 members with EVOS RFB for communications shifts in the Bega Fire Control Centre.
- Over 600 person hours.

At home, other members covered the local area attending to the usual emergency callouts, and ensured vehicles and equipment were well serviced and stocked.

Here, on the Coolagalite Fire, our crew extinguish yet another batch of smouldering stumps and logs to prevent re-ignition.



## THE AIDER PROGRAM

The AIDER (Assist Infirm, Disabled and Elderly Residents) program is a free, one-off service which supports some of our most at-risk community members.

The AIDER program helps people live more safely and confidently in their home in areas where bush fires may start. AIDER services can include clearing gutters, thinning vegetation around the home, and trimming branches. It is designed for people who have limited domestic support available from family, relatives, friends, or other services. If you would like to know more about the free, one-off AIDER service, refer to the contact details below.



## THE MALUA BAY RURAL FIRE BRIGADE

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. The brigade is 50 years old next year.

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

Voluntary financial donations 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 and improve our operational capacity.

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](mailto:maluabayrfsbrigade@gmail.com) with information about your donation.



## CONTACT US

- PO Box 2040, Malua Bay, NSW 2536
- Email: [maluabayrfsbrigade@gmail.com](mailto:maluabayrfsbrigade@gmail.com)
- Brigade Website: [www.maluabayrfs.com](http://www.maluabayrfs.com)
- Brigade Facebook Page: [www.facebook.com/maluabayruralfirebrigade](http://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