



## **ANNUAL NEWSLETTER**

### **BUSHFIRE SEASON 2024 – 2025**

The Malua Bay Rural Fire Brigade's members are all volunteers, operating under NSWRFs, protecting the coastal urban communities in the Eurobodalla Local Government Area on the Far South Coast of NSW. The Brigade celebrated 50 Years of service this year.

The 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. Other support activities include hazard reduction, assisting property owners with pile burns, vegetation clearing, upgrades to our station and equipment, fire trail mapping and static water sources for our area.

#### **CAPTAIN'S MESSAGE**

When you live in a bushfire-prone area, ensuring an up-to-date bushfire survival plan and preparing your property are crucial to preserving life and protecting valuable assets.

When it comes to bushfires, there is never any room for complacency. Remaining vigilant and ensuring you are always bushfire-ready is even more critical as a changing climate creates uncertainty and increases the potential for higher-intensity fires.

We have been much drier than usual over winter and into spring. If the drier conditions continue, we only need one bad fire-weather day for an emergency and, unfortunately, loss of some sort or other generally attends these incidents.

While we may not have the widespread catastrophic fires of the 2019/20 season, localised and intense fires could still occur, and any loss would be devastating to those involved.

If you need any advice regarding what you need to do to be bushfire-ready, please get in touch with us. If you need assistance to prepare your property, you may qualify for the RFS's Assist Infirm, Disabled or Elderly Residents (AIDER) program. See our website for details.



## 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 faces 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.

You will get all you need to know at the RFS website <https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/>



## THE AIDER PROGRAM

The AIDER (Assist Infirm, Disabled and Elderly Residents) program is a free, one-off service which supports 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.



**To find out more, please call (02) 8741 4955**

## VOLUNTEER FIREFIGHTERS WANTED

**Are you ready to be effective in 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. When you volunteer, you vote for the kind of community you want to live in.

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.



## THE VMS TRAILER

The brigade purchased a Portable Variable Message Sign (VMS) Solar-powered trailer during the year, with generous support from a local benefactor.

The VMS trailer will be used to communicate relevant timely and important messages to the Malua Bay community to complement other forms of communication.

The trailer can be moved to suitable local spots and will be very helpful when coping with emergency conditions.



## DONATIONS

Voluntary financial donations are the fairest method of raising funds for your local brigade and your donations 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.

Donations can be made using this QR Code which will take you to the RFS brigade donations page. You can also donate directly by Bank Transfer to our Malua Bay Fire Rural Brigade account BSB 062-650, Account Number 00900077 or depositing into it 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.



## CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY

On Saturday 4 May, the Malua Bay Rural Fire Brigade celebrated its 50th anniversary of service to the community. Over 60 current and former members and family members gathered for a reunion at the Fire Shed in Reservoir Road for a BBQ and shared memories. Initial Deputy Captain Ron Dent spoke about how he and others formed the brigade in 1974. Long term former Captain Dave Ramsland recalled that in the 1979 fires they raced back from Mogo to Malua Bay only to find the fire had beaten them there. In those days, members were alerted



*Presentation of National Service Medal to George Riddell (centre front) in December 1997 celebrating his 59 years of service.*

to the need to go to the station by a very loud siren that was on the roof of the shed. The siren is still in working order although no longer in active service given the modern methods of communication.

Martin Green, the longest serving current member and life member, also reminisced about past fires. This year, Life Membership was awarded to Dave Ramsland and to the current long serving Maintenance Officer, plus BBQ chef, plus morale booster, plus "Great Guy", Bob (Bugsy) Blake.

## CONTACT US

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- Brigade Mobile Phone: 0456 088 200
- Email: [maluabayrfsbrigade@gmail.com](mailto:maluabayrfsbrigade@gmail.com)
- Brigade Website: [www.maluabayrfs.com](http://www.maluabayrfs.com)
- Brigade Facebook Page: [www.facebook.com/maluabayruralfirebrigade](https://www.facebook.com/maluabayruralfirebrigade)
- Captain: Berkeley Braham, 0427 361 889
- Treasurer: Michael Lane, 0438 61 51 61
- Station Location: Top of Reservoir Road, Malua Bay