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Current National Security Alert Level: **High**

This issue of Commissioner's Corner comes from Acting Commissioner Jim Smith.

GENERAL

Open Day a huge success around the State

On Saturday 30 May, FRNSW crews all over the State welcomed tens of thousands of people for the 2015 Open Day. Reports from around the stations suggest that attendance was up across the board thanks to a massive effort from crews who worked hard to get the message out in their local communities. While Open Day is a big commitment, the rewards definitely make it all worthwhile. See the intranet story posted 4 June for stories and photos from various stations; the September issue of Fire & Rescue News will also have an Open Day feature.

For the first time, FRNSW partnered with NSW Kids in Need to collect donations at around 40 fire stations for six children's charities. The fire stations were part of NSW Kids in Need's Biggest Open House event which also included Richmond Air Base and HMAS Toowoomba. Kids in Need Chairman Peter Debnam said indications were that each charity would equally receive "tens of thousands of dollars" with some participating fire stations raising well over a thousand dollars each.

Thank you to everyone who played a part in this year's event. Well done on making it bigger and better than ever.

Mobile USAR prop wins at Good Design Awards

On Friday 29 May, FRNSW's new USAR transportable structural collapse training prop was a winner at the 2015 Good Design Awards. Our Ingleburn Operational Capability staff entered the prop in the ['Product Design – Commercial and Industrial'](#) category, up against 21 other nominees including multinationals such as Qantas, Pepsi, Honeywell, OPAL and Ryobi. The USAR prop won the prestigious Patron's Prize which recognises and celebrates the best Australian-designed project, and is awarded to "entries that have the potential to shape the future economic, social, cultural and environmental aspects of our world". Congratulations to everyone involved.

The idea for the training prop arose from attending overseas training exercises. Based on the dimensions of an ISO shipping container, the prop, which is totally transportable and resettable, simulates a structural collapse for locating and rescuing trapped victims. The prop has been used in skills maintenance sessions and was recently used during the major Sydney CBD exercise. We shared the design and specifications with ACT Fire & Rescue who have now bought two props of their own. A second transportable prop is currently in production, and will include a trench collapse and progressive pancake collapse.

ComSafe provides fire safety training at NSW Government House

On 25 May ComSafe provided vital fire safety training at one of the State's most iconic buildings, the heritage-listed NSW Government House, located in Sydney's Botanic Gardens. Senior Training Officer SF Andrew

Fraser conducted First Attack Firefighting training for His Excellency General The Honourable David Hurley AC DSC (Ret'd), his wife Mrs Linda Hurley and all the staff who work at the Government House.

The training provided was both comprehensive and well received. It included preparing for site-specific fires, reporting a fire, evacuating from endangered areas, fire characteristics and fire behaviour, effects of smoke on people, classes of fire and first attack firefighting equipment. Staff were also shown several videos demonstrating the speed at which fires can take hold in residential premises.

As part of the training, SF Fraser took the Governor, his wife and their staff throughout the building pointing out various firefighting equipment and systems. The course concluded with a practical familiarisation exercise where Government House staff used fire extinguishers and fire blankets to practise extinguishing or smothering a small fire.

Launch of 2015 Commissioner's Safety Awards

Nominations are now being accepted for the 2015 Commissioner's Safety Awards following the success of last year's inaugural awards. This program recognises individuals and groups in FRNSW who demonstrate outstanding efforts to improve and promote safety. This may be through innovative thinking to reduce an incident ground or station based safety risk, taking initiative to improve health and safety at your workplace, or helping someone to get back to work after a workplace injury.

The Awards are open to all FRNSW employees, with nominations closing 15 September. Nominations may be submitted for past initiatives that continue to provide safety benefits today. See last year's finalists and winners for ideas on what types of initiatives were recognised. For nomination forms, guidelines and more information see the [intranet toolkit](#) (Toolkits > Organisation Wide > Workplace Safety > Safety Legislation and Guidance Material > [Commissioners Safety Awards](#)) or contact Health & Safety on 9265 2800.

Queen's Birthday honours announced

I congratulate the FRNSW officers who were awarded the Australian Fire Service Medal in the 2015 Queen's Birthday Honours. This year's FRNSW AFSM recipients are Chief Superintendent Paul McGuiggan, Superintendent Kim Reeson, Station Officer Mark Black, Narrabri Captain Shane Bradford and Manilla Captain Edward Taylor. All five recipients of this prestigious medal have demonstrated an exceptional level of service and commitment to FRNSW and the community over many years, and this award is a timely recognition of their outstanding efforts throughout their firefighting career.

Sydney hosts national Emergency Media and Public Affairs Conference

On Monday 1 June Commissioner Mullins officially opened the Emergency Media and Public Affairs Conference in Sydney. This annual event provides opportunities for emergency services media and communications practitioners to meet and discuss strategies. In addition to our own media staff, attendees included around 100 NSW and interstate delegates from a range of agencies including Police, volunteer fire agencies, NSWSES, Defence, Bureau of Meteorology, Red Cross, airport corporations and media representatives including the ABC.

Program presenters included Assistant Commissioner Mark Brown and Superintendents Ian Krimmer and Paul Bailey who shared some FRNSW perspectives. Several international keynote speakers highlighted that a major challenge for emergency communicators is how we educate our communities to be more self-reliant with their own rehearsed action plans in place. The reality of terrorism, heatwaves, pandemics, earthquakes, tsunamis and severe cyclones together with the more traditional fire, flood and storm emergencies means that our public and media communicators need to be using the latest technologies and strategies.

2015 Emergency Services Winter Blood Drive

For the sixth consecutive year FRNSW, NSW Police Force, Ambulance Service of NSW, NSWSES and NSWRFPS are rolling up their sleeves and donating blood in support of a nation-wide campaign to save lives. The 2015 Emergency Services Challenge runs from 1 June to 31 August, with emergency services competing to see which organisation can make the most donations. Last year, FRNSW won the award for highest employee participation.

This year's Australian Red Cross campaign 'Red25' aims to increase blood donations by 25%. Winter is a challenging time for blood stocks as many regular donors are unable to donate due to colds and flu. I encourage all FRNSW staff to participate which will boost the FRNSW tally. For more information, please see the intranet toolkit (Toolkits > Organisation Wide > Health, Fitness and Wellbeing > Health & Medical> [Blood Donation](#)).

What's happening with the head office relocation?

You may be wondering how the head office relocation to 1Amarina is progressing. We want to make sure everyone is informed of the current state of play.

We have experienced a delay in going out to tender – but the approval to proceed is expected shortly. Once the tender process is complete the demolition and subsequent construction of the new 1Amarina building will begin.

Given these circumstances, head office will not relocate to 1Amarina in 2015. More information on timing will be available once the tender stage is complete.

Staff consultation will continue through the head office Ways of Working group. This group has helped develop strategies and plans to assist changes in our current work environment. A staff consultation group will soon also be formed at Greenacre to complement this process.

Everyone has the opportunity at any time to ask questions and provide feedback by emailing 1Amarina@fire.nsw.gov.au or through your representative in the Ways of Working group (WoW). The list of your representatives in the WoW can be found at: <http://intranet/toolkit/organisation-wide/property/1-amarina/new-ways-of-working-group>

We will continue to provide regular information/updates regarding this development.

Newcastle Firefighters Ball

A reminder that the Newcastle Firefighters Fundraising Ball will be held Friday 18 September at Wests, 88 Hobart Road, New Lambton. Cost is \$120 per head, and includes a 3-course dinner, drinks and entertainment, which should ensure a great night for all. Call Bev Creagh or Shayne Elms on 4907 4999 to book your table. All proceeds go to burns survivors at John Hunter Children's Hospital and the K.I.D.S. Foundation.

INCIDENTS

4th Alarm structure fire at Auburn

At 0425 hours on Tuesday 2 June, fire crews were called by Police to smoke and embers coming from a gym building on Parramatta Rd Auburn. Within minutes of the call being received, 19 Silverwater were on scene and attempting offensive firefighting operations. They called for backup which included the attendance of two aerial appliances.

The two-level building which measured 15m x 45m had a well developed fire on both floors. The crew from 19 tried to gain entry through a large roller shutter door at the side of the building. Once they had cut through the roller door, the crew discovered that a gyprock stud wall had been built across the opening which hindered entry and subsequent fire attack to the premises.

The upper level contained heavy machinery so crews were mindful of possible building collapse as the structure deteriorated. As the fire developed and backup crews from 30 Lidcombe and 27 Parramatta arrived, internal fire attack was withdrawn and LP27 was set up in sector B to ascertain the extent of the fire and to protect exposures. LP27 reported that the fire had spread to the roof and the building had collapse in a number of areas on the upper floor.

Parramatta Duty Commander Insp Bob McGowan arrived, and after a size up, requested a 4th Alarm response due to the fire's severity and lack of access to sector C where the fire was fiercest. A full IMT responded as well. Parramatta Road was closed in both directions as firefighters required access to a 300 mm

main which ran along the westbound footpath of Parramatta Road. LP18 was set up to protect exposures in sector D while crews from 55 Guildford and 16 Concord smashed through floor-to-ceiling glass windows to gain access to the fire.

During the course of the fire, FRNSW crews and the Communications Centre suffered major communication problems due to a Telstra outage in the area. Deputy Commissioner Jim Smith attended and at 0707 hours, Duty Commander Parramatta sent a "position in hand" message. Crews did a great job confining the fire to the building of origin and protecting the shops in sector B and Auburn Public School in sector C. The road was re-opened at 0900 hours.

The cause of the fire was investigated by FIRU and Police Forensics and our latest K9 Recruit Earl had his first go at detecting an accelerant. Earl detected the accelerant without any problem as investigators found evidence of fuel cans at the scene. Police are further investigating the fire.

Spate of kitchen and dryer fires

Since launching our winter fire safety campaign on 25 May, more than 40 kitchen fires have occurred, most of which were due to unattended cooking. Our winter safety message is "Keep looking when cooking" and I urge everyone, firefighters and admin and trades staff to keep getting this message out to the community. During the cooler months between May and September, we always see a sharp rise in home fires with FRNSW crews attending on average 100 fires a week.

This past week also saw a number of fires in clothes dryers, usually due to failure to clean the lint filter. Most of these fires occurred when people were away from the home and had left their dryers on, or at night when they were asleep. One fire last week in Bondi occurred at 1400 hours in a dryer which had been left on even though the occupants weren't at home. Fire crews quickly extinguished the fire and subsequently found that there were no smoke alarms in the two-level home.

It is a timely reminder for all stations to keep up our prevention strategies. If you do come across a fire in a dryer or any other electrical appliance, please remember to report the make and model number to FIRU who continually monitor product faults and recalls.

ASK THE COMMISSIONER

Q. Given the small number of participants who have gained accreditation under the current Primary Rescue Operator Program (PROP) model, [approximately 20 in the last year or so], will the organisation consider other models, especially when the rescue assessors have put forward seemingly better and more streamlined models?

A. The Primary Rescue Operator Program (PROP) was introduced in March 2014. Its intent was to enable permanent firefighters who wanted to become primary rescue operators to undertake this training on-shift and to learn at their own pace. Conducting training in this way was a very different approach to doing things for everyone involved, and like any new program, can take time to gather momentum. It is correct that approximately 20 people have completed the PROP in the first 12 months since its inception; however in the following two months, an additional 11 people completed the program.

At present around 85 people are enrolled on the PROP of which 16 are in the last two phases of the four-phase program. Therefore, rather than looking to change the program entirely, it may be more worthwhile to consider how the existing program can be improved. Email Assistant Director Training Bob Murray and A/Manager Technical Training Jeremy Stubbs if you have ideas to improve the current system.

Commissioner's email: Commissioner@fire.nsw.gov.au

Sandra Garcia, EA to Commissioner: 9265 2930

Ask the Commissioner: OfficeOfTheCommissioner@fire.nsw.gov.au