



# Fortuna Group Newsletter

Region 2 now has a  
fee call number

1800 735 202

## Inside this issue:

<i>Fire Season 2007 / 08</i>	2
<i>Fortuna Group leads the way in</i>	2
<i>News from the Region 2</i>	3
<i>Farewell to Maiden Gully foundation</i>	3
<i>Who's Who in Region 2</i>	4
<i>Brigade News</i>	4

*This newsletter is available by email.*

*Simply email your details to ,*  
[go@fortunagroup.com.au](mailto:go@fortunagroup.com.au)

## Upcoming Events -

- Joint Groups Working party meeting 19<sup>th</sup> Feb
- Group Training sub committee meeting 20<sup>th</sup> Feb
- Fortuna Group meeting 27<sup>th</sup> Feb

## *From the Fortuna Group Officer Peter Rogasch*

*Welcome to the New Year and I hope you and your families will have a Safe and prosperous 2008.*

The 2008 fire season has started a lot like the way I used to remember them, (in the olden days), with a rain event to start the fire season off, all be it a little early. This created the first major run for Fortuna Brigades for the fire season in support of the SES in dealing with the hundreds of calls for assistance from house holders and businesses in need of help from the flood waters. Brigades were busy responding to alarms and calls when the Fortuna Group was activated to support the SES in providing Intel on where the flood waters were. Kangaroo Flat, Golden Square, Strathfieldsaye, Eaglehawk, Huntly brigades took part in this operation along the Bendigo Creek, from Crusoe Res to Kamarooka which enabled the IC to plan the response that was needed. Fortuna Group was then asked to provide the SES support by way of attending calls and assessing the needs of the house holders; from helping to clean up or providing sand bags, to preventing further flooding. Brigades attended nearly 40 calls over the two hour period. On behalf of Mark Cattell (SES

Incident Controller) I would like to thank Group & Brigade personnel that took part in this event on the professional way you all went about the job at hand (**WELL DONE**).

### *O'Sullivan's Road Fire Marong*

*Brigades from Bendigo and Fortuna Groups showed a professional and timely response to the fire at Marong. The actions of the Brigades prevented the fire becoming a much bigger event. Again WELL DONE to ALL involved.*



*Remember as we are only two thirds the way through the fire season remember to take time away from your brigade a spend time with family and friends.*

Spectrum Pre Conference System Hub Testing for Fortuna Group  
Third Wednesday Of Each Month 1900hrs.

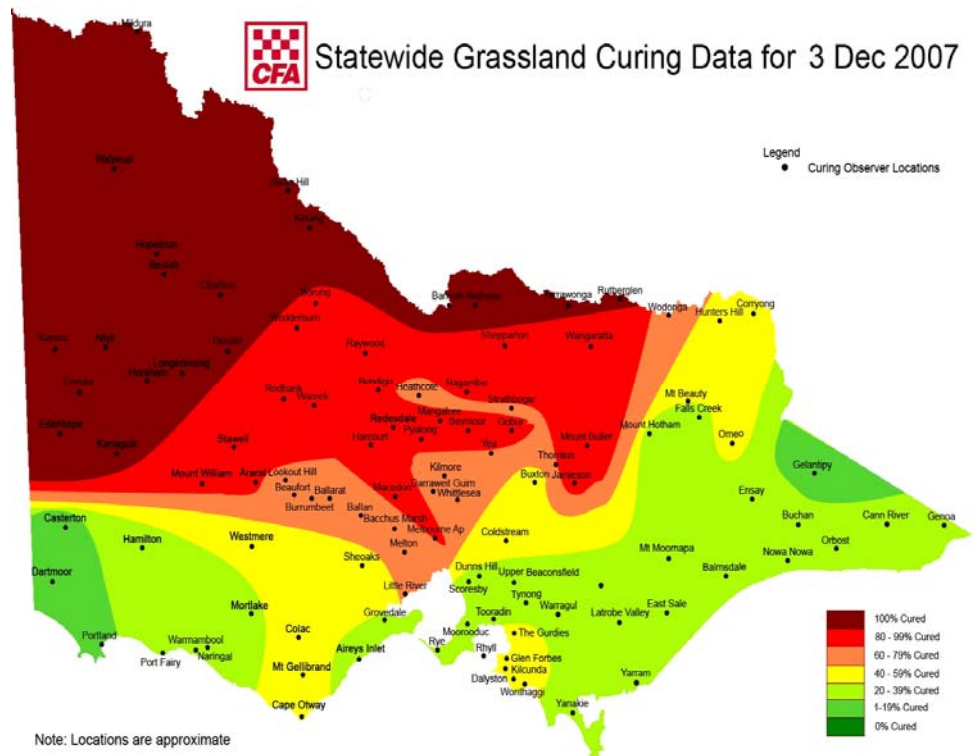
## Fire Season 2007/08 – Where are we now?

Mike Wassing Operations Manager Region 2

You will recall that things started early for us this season with low pre-season rainfalls attributing to the grass drying out four to six weeks before average and hence the fire danger period being introduced on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2007.

Since this time, we have been fortunate to receive several rain periods that has lowered the risk of fire periodically. Assisted by high levels of brigade, group and region preparedness we have experienced very few significant fires within our local area.

Just as interestingly, the southern parts of Victoria including Gippsland and even as close as Ballarat, have had very much greener fuel conditions yet have already had several significant fires. To date, brigades from the Region have not yet been called upon to assist due to the recognition of our early fire season, drought impacts on communities in many rural districts and the lower risk regions south of the Great Divide being utilised first; something we had recommended to the State coordinator for CFA



But what of our condition today and for the remaining fire season?

Forest fire risk remains relatively moderate for the short term, especially when compared with the extreme conditions of recent years. A similar risk exists for grasslands with some green pick growing after the rain and many agricultural paddocks being worked up. However, as always, the fire weather conditions of the day make a significant difference to risk and with predicted average higher temperatures combined with higher humidity for the rest of summer, there is still every chance of significant and often erratic fire behaviour.

It is still early days and typically our fire danger has continued through to April and May in recent years.

## Fortuna Group Leads the Way in ICT

This season we have introduced the use of Electronic submission of Hot Day Response information. Brigades are now able to submit their names and equipment commitment to the Group for Code Red and TFB days online. This has been an initiative made possible by the collaboration between Fortuna Group and the Region management staff, and the brilliant ICT skills of Golden Square's Jason Koch.

Brigade Captains are now able to log onto the Group

website, [www.fortunagroup.com.au](http://www.fortunagroup.com.au), and, using a specially set up password, access the form on which they can submit availability for Level 3 IMT, Group assistance, crew leader and crew for the day.

I am proud to say this change has been taken up by all Brigades without a hitch, showing how Fortuna Group are always keen to embrace change and move with the times.

## News from Region 2 - February Ops Report

By Ops Officer Mark Gilmore

### PREPAREDNESS

Good rains have eased the bush-fire risk slightly for now although it may have elevated the wet hay risk. Some hot bales were found this week which were stored in lines along a fence. They had been baled in October. It appears that grasses and crops did not cure internally this year and the rains after baling have wet the bales and kept this core of sap green for much longer than normal.

Telstra have been asked by the Government to delay the turnoff date for CDMA for a couple of months to ensure coverage issues are addressed.

If you have not sent in your 7 mobile phone numbers for paging yet get them to John Cutting ASAP.

From Dick Yates Make sure you cut fences halfway between the posts not right at the post as this makes straining the fence up much easier. Just cut the fence in one spot is good too.

Wall planners and pocket diaries (first in best dressed) and changeover portable batteries are available at Region 2 HQ.

Ops Checklists for crew leaders and SOP's for brigades are being distributed this month.

Channel 106 has not been implemented yet in Maldon and Metcalfe groups due to inadequate coverage. Tweaking and testing is continuing.

GPS power leads are being replaced free of charge by Garmin. If not already done please bring in your old lead to Sharon Moloney so we can send it away for changeover.

Energy Safe Victoria have extra Electricity Hazards and Safety handbooks available if anyone requires extras simply ring Stacey on 92039700.

Cad map version 22 has been loaded and is now being used by vicfire.

### Fires

On December 29<sup>th</sup> Marong Capt Gary Parlby was tested when he arrived in O'Sullivan's Rd Marong to find a two story western red cedar house on fire which was spotting over into adjacent grassland. The resulting grass fire ran hard and travelled about a kilometre burning around 20 Ha. Not only a good job done by Bendigo and Fortuna group tankers on both the grass and the house but also very pleasing that the thermal image camera sent out from Bendigo Fire Station the next day found no hotspots due to the excellent mopping up done.

### CFA People News

Farewell to Dean Cunningham (Red Cross in Melbourne) and Catherine Docking (Gainsborough Hardware in Blackburn) who are both leaving us. We wish them all the best in their new careers.

Farewell to FO Rob (Rocket) Ellis he has retired from Bendigo brigade after 42 years with CFA.

Our thoughts are with the family of CFA Volunteer Steven Jamieson from Bendoc who died recently in a bulldozer rollover at the east Gippsland fires.

## *Farewell to Maiden Gully Foundation Member Clive Fricker*



Many Fortuna Group firefighters will know Clive Fricker who has been a member at Maiden Gully since the formation of the Brigade. Clive and wife Kathy have just moved to Brisbane. Clive has been a member of the Maiden Gully BMT for 8 years and a lieutenant for 6 of these. His contribution to the brigade has been outstanding and has assisted many other Fortuna Brigades especially with Alarms & Sprinklers training at Bendigo health Care where he work.

*Photo-RL Maiden Gully Captain Andrew Howlett, FF. Clive Fricker, Fortuna Group Officer Peter Rogasch*

## Who's Who in Region 2



**Frank Beukelman**

**Pad Supervisor Northern District Training Ground**

*Q: What do you enjoy most about your job?*

**A:** The people, the variety, the challenges. I've been 30 years as a volunteer. It's a diverse organization which has the ability to adapt and at the end of the day we get the job done.

*Q: What is your current position?*

**A:** My current position is Training Ground Supervisor / Pad Supervisor managing the site and running the Business,

*Q: How long have you been there?*

**A:** Four weeks tomorrow

*Q: What other positions have you held in the CFA prior to this?*

**A:** Before moving to Rochester to take up my new position I spent a couple of summers at HQ around the time of Ash Wednesday as casual staff.

In 2000 I rejoined the CFA as a Paddy (PAD operator) at South East Training Ground

As a volunteer I held the positions of 2DGO South East Group Region 8 (Training) and Senior Volunteer Officer Springvale Fire Brigade

*Q: What do you enjoy least?*

**A:** Politics.

*Q: What is your favourite food?*

**A:** Greek and lots of it. Trying to give up Tim Tams.

*Q: What type of car do you drive? What would you like to drive?*

**A:** EZ Commodore. I'd like a new SS Commodore.

*Q: What do you do in your spare time?*

**A:** I don't get much spare time, but I enjoy cruising around on my motorbike, visiting friends.

*Q: Do you have a philosophy that helps you get through the day?*

**A:** Be friendly, courteous, respectful and mindful of others.

## Brigade News



If anyone is interested in assisting in the production of this newsletter please contact Group Officer Peter Rogasch

Contributions to the bi monthly newsletter need to be submitted to Group Officer Peter Rogasch by 15th each month.

email - [go@fortunagroup.com.au](mailto:go@fortunagroup.com.au)

or

c/o CFA Region 2  
PO Box 3  
Bendigo 3552

**Captain Koala is back**, bigger, better and newer than before. Brigades wanting Captain Koala's assistance please phone Andrew Gill or Karen Marini at Community Safety.

*Captain Koala could be coming to a IGA near you.*