

Hopkins-Curdies Group and its member brigades were responded to a haystack fire involving a large hay shed in Mepunga on 18 November at 0527 hours.

As a result of the blaze a total of 500 big square hay bales were lost. Crews let burn these burn down and with the help of an excavator the remaining ashes were extinguished 36 hours later utilising all 10 brigade tankers within the group as well as a brigade member's private bulk water tanker.

There was a house fire in Cudgee in early December which destroyed the kitchen area. Thankfully, the neighbours saw it early and notified Cudgee Brigade quickly.

Five tankers attended with crews doing a great job.

Cudgee Brigade held its Christmas party last month together with the presentation of service medals. These were presented by Commander **Terry Heafield**.

Former Captain and now Lieutenant **Stewart Drake** was presented with life membership of Cudgee Fire Brigade, which he accepted from Captain **Clayton Young**. By the laughter on those faces it must have been one of those hilarious moments as Terry presented **Brendan Johnson** (green shirt), one of our loveable characters, with his 25 year service medal.

Hopkins-Curdies Group held its annual exercise recently, this being hosted by Mepunga Fire Brigade

The day's program was well attended by crews from member brigades and involved drafting; visit to Colin Smith's grain mill;

News from the south-west

(from our Hopkins-Curdies Group correspondent)



Crews from all brigades within the Hopkins-Curdies Group battled a hay shed fire at Mepunga in November. Unfortunately 500 large hay bales were lost in the blaze with the incident spanning 36 hours. It was a great effort by all involved at the incident.

and a visit to Boyles Transport depot and workshop.

During the exercise crews had to respond a call to an escaped burn off at Garvoc which was quickly dealt with by responding crews.



Cudgee Brigade service medal recipients were, from left: Leigh Myronick (5 years), Lieutenant Stewart Drake (40 years and brigade life membership), Captain Clayton Young (15 years), Treasurer Jan Mahony (40 years), Glyn Coulson (5 years), Robert O'Brien (25 years), Lieutenant Wade Young (5 years), Jayne Young (5 years), Lieutenant Brendon Johnson (25 years) and District 5 CFA Commander Terry Heafield.

GRAHAM WINS ROTARY AWARDS

Captain Graham Symons is well regarded for his outstanding leadership of Omeo Fire Brigade of which he has been Captain for more than 10 years and a member in excess of 40 years. He is also the Group Officer of Omeo Group.

His lifelong dedication to the local community is exceptional and incorporates a variety of other various roles including as an Ambulance Victoria community officer for 33 years.

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Graham was honoured in the inaugural Victorian Rotary Emergency Services Community Awards (RESCA) for the voluntary category back in September.

The prestigious awards recognise two members of emergency services (one volunteer and one paid) who go above and beyond; the awards are for those who reflect the Rotary motto of 'Service above Self'.

"We're involved in a lot of things within our community and through CFA we've succeeded in getting a couple of satellite stations for the Omeo Brigade and have also managed to get funding for a

lot of equipment for both our brigade and other brigades in the area," Captain Graham said.

Following his Victorian Rotary win Graham was also as the National RESCA Volunteer award winner at a later event.

This prestigious award was conferred upon Graham at a ceremony at Government House in Canberra by the Governor-General, His Excellency General the Honourable **David Hurley** AC DSC (Retd) and Her Excellency Mrs **Linda Hurley**.

Graham's family as well as representative of Rotary were present at the ceremony, together with leaders of the emergency services sector from across Victoria, NSW and the ACT.

The ceremony was followed by a morning tea at Government House where Graham was congratulated.

Graham said he was most humbled to be nominated in the first place and even more so to have won both the won-

derful awards.

"Rotary does a great job within the community, and I think one of the reasons that I was nominated was because of all of the work I've put in that space."

Graham said doing the best for others is at the heart of all he does.

"You certainly don't do any of this to get something at the end, because it's more about looking after your community. It's more about being identified, and I'm pretty chuffed that I've been recognised, I guess. I think it's lovely that the people that chose to recognise me, they must have thought that I've done something half decent – so it's really special."

The 2024 Victorian RESCA program will be launched in February 2024 with nominations accepted from 1 March to 30 April 2024. Nominations may be made by anyone in the community including emergency service colleagues.

Visit the Victorian RESCA website for more information.

VALE HAROLD TAYLOR

The fire service has lost a great friend, colleague, teammate, competitor, and most of all mentor, with the recent passing of Harold Taylor.

A CFA icon Harold served for 67 years and was held in extremely high regard by all who knew him.

Joining Maldon Fire Brigade in 1952 was the beginning of a life-long passion with CFA for Harold.

A great athlete from his very early days, he excelled at State championships and whilst a member of Maldon Brigade he won a State title in each of the Marshall One and Marshall Two competition events.

In 1958 Harold was married to Sue and two years later he joined the Victorian Police Force, where he served for 27 years and rose to the rank of Chief Inspector. He also performed as Drum Major for many years with the Police Band.

Soon after his employ with Victorian Police Harold transferred to Carrum (now Patterson River Fire Brigade).

He became coach of the brigade's competition team which, at one stage, won 10 grand aggregate titles in 11 years (1961-1971) under his leadership.

As a highly valued member of the competition team Harold was not only a renowned wet work competitor but also added to his own tally of State titles by winning another four himself (two in each of the marshall events) and led the brigade's Discipline Squad to an amazing 21 wins from 1969 to 2005.



His record as a coach and competitor was phenomenal, in fact second to none.

Midway through 2005 Harold transferred to Mornington Brigade where he coached the brigade's Discipline Squad to five State titles.

He resigned from CFA in 2019 after 67 years of dedicated service. He had donated the arm shields for the State Marshall Two event winners for more than 30 years.

Harold was also the leader of the Mornington Shire Marching Band for some years, in between his commitments to mentoring the next CFA champions.

During his many years of involvement at State championships Harold made many friends and was widely respected throughout the State. He was a person that people admired and was a mentor to many.

2024 Rural Competitions

DISTRICT	DAY & DATE	LOCATION
District 2 (twilight)	Fri Feb 2	Mandurang
District 2 (twilight)	Fri Feb 16	Mandurang
District 7	Sun Feb 25	Connewarre
District 24	Sun Feb 25	Gapsted
North West Region	Sun Feb 25	Charlton
District 2	Sun Mar 3	Maryborough
District 23	Sun Mar 3	Eldorado
Mandurang	Sun Mar 11	Mandurang
District 14	Sun Mar 16	Plenty
West Region	Sun Mar 17	Smythesdale
District 22	Sun Mar 17	Mooroopna

RURAL STATE SENIOR CHAMPIONSHIPS

– MOOROOPNA – 23 MARCH, 2024

RURAL STATE JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIPS

– MOOROOPNA – 24 MARCH, 2024



Omeo Fire Brigade's Graham Symons (left) with the Chair of the Emergency Services Foundation, Tony Pearce, receiving the Victorian Rotary Emergency Services Community Awards (RESCA) for the voluntary category back in September.

BE A REGULAR READER

"Fire Wise", published monthly, contains a variety of information of value and interest to personnel of the fire service. Quarterly editions, including the VFBV Quarterly Supplement will be mailed to the address nominated, whilst the other eight electronic editions will be emailed to the email address provided, this being the subscription for 12 months.

Cost \$37 (interstate subscribers \$45). Please contact the office on 0402 051 412, email gordon@fire-wise.com.au or order online at www.fire-wise.com.au

URBAN COMPETITIONS 2024

ORGANISATION	DAY & DATE	VENUE	START	ENTRY	CONTACT	PHONE
Western Districts	Sat Jan 13	Colac	0930	Snrs/jnrs	Andrew Bath	0419 557 439
Greater Midlands	Sat Jan 13	Swan Hill	1000	Juniors	Harold Jochs	0428 352 933
Greater Midlands	Sun Jan 14	Swan Hill	1000	Seniors*	Harold Jochs	0428 352 933
Western Districts	Sat Jan 20	Hamilton	1300	Snrs/jnrs	Nathan Appledore	0448 186 904
Greater Midlands	Sat Jan 20	Melton	1200	Juniors	Harold Jochs	0428 352 933
Greater Midlands	Sun Jan 21	Melton	0900	Seniors	Harold Jochs	0428 352 933
Combined Gippsland	Sat Feb 3	Morwell	1000	Snrs/jnrs	Helen White	0428 329 233
Greater Midlands	Sat Feb 3	Bendigo	0900	Junior	Harold Jochs	0428 352 933
Greater Midlands	Sun Feb 4	Bendigo	0900	Senior	Harold Jochs	0428 352 933
District 17	Sun Feb 4	Stawell	0900	Snrs/jnrs	Sarah Simmons	0439 499 131
Combined Gippsland	Sat Feb 10	Morwell	1000	Snrs/jnrs	Helen White	0428 329 233
Western Districts	Sat Feb 10	Osborne Park	0900	Juniors	Terry Mann	0412 516 184
Western Districts	Sun Feb 11	Osborne Park	0900	Seniors	Terry Mann	0412 516 184
Eastern Districts	Sat Feb 17	Morwell	0900	Snrs/jnrs	Brad Miller	0400 876 325
Combined East Central	Sat Feb 24	Hallam	0900	Snrs/jnrs	David Baptist	0459 283 174
Western Districts	Sat Feb 24	Warrnambool	0930	Juniors	Tom Woodhams	0406 778 692
Greater Midlands	Sat Feb 24	Tatura	0900	Juniors	Harold Jochs	0428 352 933
Greater Midlands	Sun Feb 25	Tatura	0900	Seniors	Harold Jochs	0428 352 933
Western Districts	Sun Feb 25	Warrnambool	0930	Seniors	Tom Woodhams	0406 778 692
Greater Midlands	Sat Mar 2	Echuca	0900	Snrs/jnrs	Harold Jochs	0428 352 933
Combined Gippsland	Sat Mar 2	Morwell	1000	Snrs/jnrs	Helen White	0428 329 233
District 17	Sun Mar 3	Warracknabeal	0900	Snrs/jnrs	Sarah Simmons	0439 499 131

URBAN STATE JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIPS – MOOROOPNA – 16-17 MARCH, 2024

URBAN STATE SENIOR CHAMPIONSHIPS – MOOROOPNA – 23-24 MARCH, 2024

RURAL STATE SENIOR CHAMPIONSHIPS – MOOROOPNA – 23 MARCH, 2024

RURAL STATE JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIPS – MOOROOPNA – 24 MARCH, 2024