

# New leadership focus for Broome BFS



Broome Bush Fire Brigade Officers (l-r): Lieutenants Linda Robertson and Noni Nimo, Captain Amanda Spencer and Lieutenant Gail Harmon.

An all female officer group has taken the reins at the Broome Bush Fire Brigade, following overwhelming support for them at the 2012 annual general meeting.

Newly appointed Captain Amanda Spencer said the Broome brigade provided a great opportunity for local volunteers to do something practical and worthwhile for their community.

"We all live and work in Broome, and serving as volunteer firefighters is our way of giving something back," Amanda said.

Joining Amanda in the new leadership group are 1st Lieutenant Linda Robertson, 2nd Lieutenant Gail Harmon and 3rd Lieutenant Noni Nimmo, and all four are longstanding volunteer members.

"We have a flexible approach within the brigade, and we all share roles and responsibilities," Amanda said.

"This helps to spread the load and make sure no officer is ever overloaded with brigade work.

"The continued growth and development of our Bush Fire Brigade is a priority, and we engage proactively with the community to recruit more volunteers.

"We achieve this by working with local networks and using word of mouth, as well as setting up public displays and being represented at career events."

Amanda said the leadership group is close knit, very approachable and fun loving.

"We are successful because we support one another during emergency incidents as well as socially," she said.

"Our brigade fosters a very accepting and friendly approach to volunteering, and it's a philosophy we find works."

Volunteer and Youth Services Manager Wayne Fanderlinden said FESA was keen to further involve women in volunteer brigades, groups and units around the State.

"Our female Bush Fire Service volunteers in Broome play an essential role in keeping their community safe," Wayne said.

"They form part of a contingent of more than 7,900 female emergency services volunteers across Western Australia who make up approximately 25 percent of FESA's total volunteer numbers.

"It is great to see how many women are involved as volunteers, but there is always room for more.

"The State Emergency Service has a female volunteer membership of almost 35 percent, while Bush Fire Brigades in WA have approximately 25 percent female membership, and other services around 20 percent each."

Wayne said FESA had been actively targeting female volunteers and those from younger age groups, Indigenous and non English speaking backgrounds, who were currently under represented.

"Our aim is to have a volunteer workforce that reflects the composition of each community," he said.