

# No fazing felt when feeding fire fighters



Linda Gilbert prepares food for famished firefighters, while Brian Inglis and Rod Martyn salivate in the background. Photo by Gary Merrin, courtesy Sunday Times

**THE logistics of supplying food to those working on and around fire lines has bedevilled fire-fighting organisations for many years.**

Fire fighting is a physically demanding task, requiring high energy output, therefore fire fighters need high energy-producing food supplied to them regularly around the clock.

Food is fuel for the body. It should be palatable and high in carbohydrates, as this is the most efficient fuel for meeting high energy needs

It needs to be supplied with a minimum of disruption to the task at hand.

Large quantities of water need also to be supplied—in fact, 200 ml every 20 minutes should be drunk. Fluid should be cool and low in sugar.

A Swan Region catering task force, established in 1995 to look at the logistics and determine strategies to overcome the

obstacles, came up with a number of suggestions, many of which were implemented on a trial basis in the 1995–96 fire season.

A mobile catering unit that can transport food at its required temperature to the fire line, and a catering handbook are two initiatives that have proved highly satisfactory.

The mobile unit stores food at its required temperature, losing only a couple of degrees over four hours.

A recent trial run saw food prepared in Dwellingup and transported to Bunbury.

Dwellingup storewoman Taryn Linning said the Bunbury fire-fighting staff sampling the goodies were most impressed that their baked potatoes were still hot enough to melt the butter, and the beef stroganoff was steaming.

"It was most satisfy-

ing to be able to supply the guys with an enjoyable meal in their break from the fire line, knowing it would help them get through the rest of the shift," Taryn said.

The catering handbook, edited by Taryn and Linda Gilbert, with input from those who helped with catering, provides information on storage and a collection of recipes to cater for 10, 25 or 50 people, and are all easy to prepare.

The handbook is being revised and will be reprinted in time for the 1996–1997 fire season.

Any contributions or suggestions will be most welcome.

Dwellingup has had the catering unit in operation for six months, and if readers wish to see it, please contact Dwellingup District manager Steve Raper, or Taryn Linning by phoning (09) 538 1078, or faxing (09) 538 1203 to arrange a visit.



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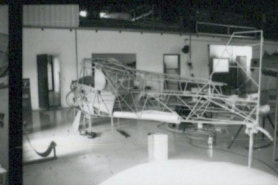
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