



Gerald Crawford, Mathew Healey, DPAC Bushfire Recovery Unit and the late Mayor of the Central Highlands, Ms Deidrie Flint OAM.

Image: Gerald Crawford

to volunteer numbers in remote areas. Fifty years ago a lot of the larger farms had a considerable number of people working on them and those people were available to join the local brigade. These days with the changes in technology and methods of farming, lots of the large farms might have only one or two people. The numbers are not there to sustain a lot of our more remote brigades,' he said.

Prior to 1967, Mr Crawford explained, the warning system for residents was rudimentary.

'The warning system was someone saw smoke, they rang the police and the police would ring the local fire warden who would make phone calls to get people to help put the fire out.

'These days we have spotter flights, we have fire towers and people with mobile phones are reporting fires.

As soon as there's a bit of smoke you can guarantee the fire is reported. On our database we can see whether that fire is one that is lit with a permit, if it's a non-permit fire, or if it's not one of those two, it's a wildfire and we can dispatch a brigade and deal with it,' he said.

Yet Mr Crawford is pragmatic about the chances of a Black Tuesday re-occurring.

'Mother Nature and fire are two things that are uncontrollable in a lot of cases. Since 1967 we've had the 2009 fires in Victoria and fires in Western Australia and NSW where people have been lost. Fires will always happen. It's a question of when. If it's getting dry, there will be more fires and those fires will be harder to contain. But people have reliable avenues now to seek advice, either from Tasmania Fire Service through the phone or online, or through local radio. The information is there, people just have to access it,' he said.

The Bushfire and Natural Hazards CRC has released a free documentary that relates the incredible stories of the fires. The film was developed by the Bushfire CRC in 2005 with the support of the Tasmania Fire Service. Watch it online at [www.bnhcrc.com.au/resources/presentation-audio-video/3361](http://www.bnhcrc.com.au/resources/presentation-audio-video/3361).

The Tasmania Fire Service has a new online resource: Stories of the '67 Fires at [www.67bushfires.fire.tas.gov.au](http://www.67bushfires.fire.tas.gov.au).

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