



The Wamboin Firefighter

A newsletter from YOUR volunteer rural fire brigade compiled by the Executive Committee, with help from many members of the Brigade

BUSHFIRE DANGER PERIOD

A FIRE PERMIT IS REQUIRED FOR ANY FIRE IN THE OPEN. PLEASE PHONE THE BRIGADE CAPTAIN FOR ADVICE ON OBTAINING A PERMIT ON 0409 991 340

RING TRIPLE ZERO TO REPORT FIRES OR SMOKE SIGHTINGS.



BRIGADE ACTIVITY DURING THE PERIOD

Thankfully, it has been a very quiet month with no fires or motor vehicle accidents to attend to. Perhaps the benign weather conditions and the end of the holiday season were factors in this great result. The very welcome and considerable rain in the second week of February was fantastic. Many properties received 100mls or more and this has helped to substantially boost the much depleted dam levels in the region. Surprisingly, there was little serious flooding across the brigade area (Bywong, Wamboin, Sutton Park and Eaglehawk localities) and, fortunately, no damage requiring brigade assistance. Some interesting photos of the recent rains in the area appear on the Wamboin Community Association website at <http://wamboincommunity.asn.au/>

While the number of incidents the brigade has had to respond to is down, we have been busy on other fronts (apart from regular training and general maintenance activities).

A Community Engagement presentation was held at the Goolabri Country Resort on Saturday morning 30th January for residents in the localities of Sutton Park, Bidges Rd and Eaglehawk. Under the theme of *Prepare. Act. Survive.* attendees learned more about the:

- risk and history of bush fire in the region;

- new fire danger ratings;
- key components of a Bush Fire Survival Plan that each household needs to prepare; and
- preparations required as part of the 'Stay and Defend' or 'Leave Early' decision-making and actioning process.

Many in the audience took the opportunity to ask questions and seek advice. Two people brought along their trailer-mounted fire-fighting pumps together with fire hose and water crate for others to see.

On Sat 20th February, the brigade again set up its bush and house fire information stall at the monthly Wamboin Home Produce Market in Bingley Way to help residents with fire-related enquiries including preparation of a Bush Fire Survival Plan. More than a dozen residents took the opportunity to visit the brigade's stall in front of the fire station and obtain information and advice from the community engagement team.

Over the past several months, in addition to encouraging and assisting residents to develop their bush fire survival plans, the brigade has continued to gather data on properties and other features in the area. Most recently, as an insert to the February edition of The Whisper, you will have received a letter from the Brigade attached to which was a Property Fire Assessment questionnaire seeking details of your property. This is part of a much bigger effort to better understand what infrastructure is in our area, where it is located and any potential hazards. In one of the fastest growing regions such is ours, keeping abreast of property and infrastructure development is important to residents and the brigade.

Concurrently we have also been engaged in a major task to assist in the correct identification of inhabited rural addresses that will eventually be linked to the information contained in the responses to the Property Fire Assessment questionnaire. It is anticipated that this will enable firefighters to be better prepared before they arrive at a property. It will also assist the control staff to assign the most appropriate fire fighting vehicles to an incident. To put this into effect Brigade members have been to the gate of each property in the Wamboin, Bywong, Sutton Park, Bidges Rd and Eaglehawk localities to determine, among other things, the exact location of property entrances, and any limitations presented by the size and features of the entrance and driveway. The information you provide in the Property Fire Assessment questionnaire you have been asked to complete and return to us will complement this information. Apart from helping you consider features of your property that may assist you with your Bush Fire Survival Plan, the information you provide will help us on those occasions where, in the event of a (bush or house) fire or other incident on your property, the crew responding can be briefed as to what to expect.

For example, your property may be one of an increasing number of homes/ other structures that have some form of solar electricity; this provides special challenges to firefighters in that isolation of power can be more difficult and it is not always obvious that the property has got solar power. Being aware of this and the location of isolator mechanisms ahead of time can be advantageous for

crews when responding to an emergency call.

Some things that you can do to help us:

- Make sure your property is correctly identified using the rural numbering system. The rural numbering system was implemented some years ago in order to make properties easier to locate in the event of an emergency. Make sure your number is clearly displayed and visible from the likely brigade approach side.
- Please remove old RMB numbers as they only confuse the situation - and not just for the fire brigade.
- Displaying the property name (if there is one) and the owner's name also assists in identifying a property.
- We have noticed that some of the reflective number signs have already deteriorated - please upgrade them to minimise confusion. It is quite possible that a fire fighting vehicle from an adjacent brigade will attend your incident, especially if breathing apparatus is needed. They will not be familiar with the area.
- The first place we check when arriving at a property under threat is the electricity meter/ switch box. Please place here a sketch map of your block showing key fire fighting features eg dams, pumps, outlets, sprinkler systems and valves. Any additional information that can be easily read and quickly understood can be invaluable to us eg how to operate a fixed sprinkler system or how to isolate your solar electricity system. When preparing your fire plan it is useful to draft it from the point of view of the reader being a total stranger.
- If you have a solar electricity system it needs to be clearly marked and identified with instructions on how to isolate it.
- You should not include in your meter box any personal or sensitive details, unless you consider them to be important. If you need further advice, please contact the Brigade Captain.

An issue we also ask you to consider: Can a fire brigade tanker access your driveway? Brigade tankers require a clearance that is 4 metres wide and 4 metres high. Does your driveway provide this clearance for its entire length? If not, it is unlikely that a large tanker will be able to access your property.

Please take the time to complete the Property Fire Assessment questionnaire (referred to above) that was included with the last Whisper and return it in the stamped self-addressed envelope that accompanied it. Include as much relevant detail as possible; and please include a plan of your block and key fire fighting features in the space provided on the reverse side of the questionnaire. The information you provide remains confidential and it is only available to a very limited number of RFS personnel.

Upcoming events

- Sat Mar 20 - brigade's fire-wise information stall for residents outside the Wamboin Home Produce Market.
- Sun Mar 28 - the brigade will be at the annual Bywong Car Boot Sale so, apart from picking up a bargain from a seller's car boot, come and have a chat with us about anything fire-wise and attend one of the several educational demonstrations we have planned for the morning.
- March - April - we will be looking for willing helpers to assist members, family and friends in this year's grape pick in Wamboin. Helping with the harvest is a key fundraiser for the brigade. Timing of the pick varies a little each year but typically it's late March and April. If you are not a member of the brigade and can spare a morning or two on a weekend and would like to help out, please contact Ian Coillet at lodestar@ozemail.com.au or ph 6238 3425.

BUSH FIRE PREPARATIONS



PREPARE. ACT. SURVIVE.

PREPARE. It is your responsibility to prepare yourself, your family and your home for the threat of bush fire. Every home must have a Bush Fire Survival Plan encompassing the decision to either “Leave Early” or to “Stay and Defend” to ensure you are prepared and know what to do in the event of a bush fire.

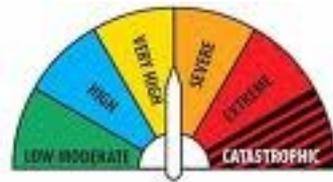
ACT. You need to act decisively in accordance with your Bush Fire Survival Plan when bush fires threaten.

SURVIVE. Your survival depends on your preparations, and the decisions you make.

Regardless of your decision, you must prepare your property to give you, your family and your home the best chance of survival. The RFS has produced guidance on the preparations and actions that you need to take in order to survive a bush fire. This advice can be found at:

http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/file_system/attachments/Attachment_Prepave.pdf

New Fire Danger Rating Signs



An explanation of the new ratings can be found at:

http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/file_system/attachments/Attachment_FireDangerRating.pdf

The Wamboin Brigade website

The Brigade’s website will enable you to monitor local conditions as well as brigade announcements. The Community Information section has particularly useful information and links to other websites that provide guidance regarding bush fire preparations. <http://brigade.wamboincommunity.asn.au>

Brigade Information Stall at the monthly Wamboin Home Produce Market

The Wamboin Fire Station and information stall is open on Wamboin Home Produce Market days (3rd Saturday in the month). Brigade members are happy to listen and offer advice to residents pertinent to their particular situation.

Finally, if you have any queries, please contact the Brigade's Captain (Andrew Dunn) on 0409 991 340 or (02) 6238 1849 (ah).

PREPARE. ACT. SURVIVE.