

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & EDUCATION > BUSHFIRE-READY NEIGHBOURHOODS NEWSLETTER



Issue 19 • Community Engagement Volunteer Edition • July 2020

Helping Tasmanian communities work together to prevent, prepare for and respond to bushfires.

This edition features articles to support community engagement for TFS volunteers:

- Getting back to our communities
- Bushfire-Ready Neighbourhoods Round 3, that's a wrap!
- TFS bushfire safety and home fire safety resources available online
- Communicating bushfire preparations in the winter
- How social media can be used by brigade members to engage residents in fire safety education
- Tasmanian Emergency Management Training.

Getting back to our communities

As we are emerging from the COVID19 restrictions and heading into our new 'normal', you may be thinking about re-commencing or considering new approaches to face-to-face engagement with your community.

We need to be mindful that some of our community members may have some hesitation about gathering in groups, venturing away from home or may be in an 'at risk' group and trying to minimise contact with others outside their home. This should not stop our plans but give us an opportunity to think outside the square and maybe try a new approach to engaging with our communities.

Meet in the Street may be one solution to consider.

What is Meet in the Street?

Meet in the Street (can also be called street meets, pop-up or drop-in sessions), are informal get-togethers where you can talk with people individually or in a small group.

It can be held near to where people live, such as a local park, on the side of the road or in an open space.

Why hold Meet in the Street?

This type of activity is great for small groups. You can provide localised and specific information. It is convenient for local residents as they do not have to go far, often within walking distance from their homes.

As this activity is great for small groups, it can be used as a re-connection activity from the previous bushfire season, as well as helping minimise community concerns over large group gatherings while emerging from COVID-19 restrictions.



How to hold Meet in the Street

Keep it simple. You can have an effective activity with minimal props. Use a sign or banner to promote your activity in the location it is going to be held. As your messages are localised, you may only need to have one or two different brochures and/or fact sheets available. The local brigade fire truck parked up may draw residents on the day. Meet in the Street is about conversations and connecting with your community rather than large displays on the day.

Keep it short. Cover the basic concepts and issues. Activities of 30-60 minutes duration is suggested. This will depend on the content you wish to cover.

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Getting back to our communities

It is an opportunity to be informal and friendly. This activity lends itself to one-on-one conversations and may lead to future activities.

It is also an opportunity to gauge interest in your community for what types of other activities they may be interested in.

What to consider:

- Have a sign-in sheet – you can collect contact details to use as follow-up for future community activities
- Follow COVID-19 requirements and meet government regulations
- Develop content to cover at activity – this may include key messages and talking points, relevant brochure and/or fact sheet and possibly a printed map of area
- Seek permission for use of space/s if required
- Consider holding activity at one site or a few sites consecutively on the same day or consecutive days/weekends if the community requires this approach

- Plan for follow up activities with residents to consider feedback and information collected at Meet in the Street activity.

Sharing your ideas:

If you have more engagement ideas for post COVID-19 restriction activities that you would like to share with other TFS Community Engagement Volunteers, please share them on the [TFS Community Engagement Facebook page](#). If you do not use Facebook, contact your regional [TFS Community Development Officer](#) and they can share your idea on your behalf.

More Information:

If you are planning to run a local Meet in the Street activity, and would like some guidance, contact your regional [TFS Community Development Officer](#) or call 6166 5544.

Selina Young

Community Development Officer, South

Bushfire-Ready Neighbourhoods Round 3, that's a wrap! (2018 to 2020)

The 2020 post-test survey has recently been completed and provides a snapshot of household bushfire preparedness with reference to key indicators, and includes a direct comparison with the 2018 pre-test survey results – an independent assessment of the effectiveness of the BRN Program within target communities.

Close to **9 in 10** households (88%) reported having a bushfire survival plan (BSP) – significantly above the 2018 pre-test level of 75%.

1 in 5 survey respondents (20%) reported that their BSP was in written form – above the pre-test level of 18%.

Over half of responding households (**57%**) reported that they would most likely leave their home early in the event of a major bushfire situation – an increase on the pre-test level of 49%.

Those involved in BRN were **more likely** to leave early compared with those not involved in BRN – and conversely less likely to stay and defend their home.

Overall household bushfire preparedness increased significantly from the pre-test result – **83%** overall, up from 76%.

The post-test result for individual indicators, is in all but one case, **above** the pre-test result and in many cases markedly so.

Those involved in BRN reported a significantly **higher** overall household bushfire preparedness, compared with those not involved in BRN.

Close to half of the survey sample (**48%**) had heard of the BRN program at the time of survey – a significant increase to the pre-test level of 34%.

Overall, BRN has made **significant change** in Round 3 in terms of behavioural change and increasing bushfire preparedness in Tasmania.

Peter Middleton

Coordinator, Community Development





Everyone should be prepared for bushfire

All the social distancing restrictions we are now facing with COVID-19 means we need to think a bit differently about how we engage with communities and share fire safety information.

One of the implications is that it may be harder to meet people face-to-face to share fire safety information with them. An alternative may be to share links to TFS webpages and/or copies of publications by email or social media. Here are a few of the resources available on the TFS website, the TFS School Fire Education website and the TFS Bushfire-Ready Neighbourhoods website.

[AlertsList](#) and [AlertsMap](#) are the best sources of up-to-date information about bushfires in Tasmania. Community members can find information on alerts and warnings for bushfires that are burning out of control. They can also tune into their local ABC radio. During bushfire season you can recommend that people keep up-to-date with the forecast Fire Danger Ratings and when Total Fire Bans and Permits are in place.

[Bushfire: Prepare.Act.Survive](#) includes videos and information about planning to [leave Early](#) or [stay and defend](#) and [property preparation](#) for bushfire. You can share a link to the [online tool](#) to help people create their [Bushfire Survival Plan](#), or to download copies of the [full booklet](#), the [leave early checklist](#) and the [stay and defend checklist](#). You can also share videos about the eight aspects of preparing a [Bushfire Ready Property](#).

To help people get a sense of the impact of bushfires in Tasmania, you can share a link to the ['67 Bushfire Story Map](#) containing stories from Tasmanians who lived through the devastating 1967 bushfires.

In terms of [Bushfire-Ready Neighbourhoods](#) (BRN), there is information [about the program, upcoming events](#), and copies of past [newsletters](#). There are also a number of useful [videos](#) about BRN activities; [Guide to burning heaps safely](#); [Emergency Alert - Be Warned. Be Informed.](#); and

[Auslan - Bushfire presented byTASDeaf](#).

Community Bushfire Plans are available and show details about the location of Nearby Safer Places.

There is useful information about [Building for Bushfire](#), including information on [Bushfire-Prone Areas](#) in Tasmania, as well as a range of [resources](#) about construction and development in bushfire-prone areas.

For primary school aged children, there is information about the [School Fire Education](#) program aimed at [teachers, parents and carers](#) as well as [TFS Kids](#) which has games and resources aimed at young children. [Disaster Resilience Education Tasmania](#) has resources for school teachers (aimed at years 5-8) to teach about the fundamentals of disaster resilience and developing safe communities.

[Bushfire-Ready Carers](#) has resources for volunteers, carers and home and community care workers for their support of residents' preparation for bushfires. [Community Phone Tree Networks](#) has information about setting up a phone tree in your area.

There are many publications available to share on the TFS website. These include [publications](#) on home fire safety, bushfire safety, bushfire safety posters, building safety, and vegetation management (you need to scroll down towards the bottom of the page to find them). There are also bushfire safety and home fire safety [publications](#) and other [useful resources](#) (such as factsheets and guidelines) on the [BRN website](#). You can [order hard copies](#) of many of these publications and other [giveaways](#) if you need them.

If you can't find the information or a publication that you want to share in your community, please contact your [Community Development Officer](#) to see if we can help or call 6166 5544.

*Brett Patterson
Community Development Officer, North West*



Communicating Bushfire Preparations in Winter

To say it's been a turbulent few months is an understatement and we're all very unsure of the immediate future, but one thing we can be sure of is the oncoming bushfire season. COVID-19 or not, we will have a bushfire season and now is the time for community engagement with residents on their bushfire preparedness, both personal and property.

Let's look at some of the areas you can concentrate on to get started on your preparations.

Bushfire Survival Plan: Planning is a fundamental element of your bushfire preparations. You should create a written plan that includes things such as:

- Where will you go if you must evacuate? A friend's home or Nearby Safer Place?
- How are you going to get there? You need more than one route if possible.
- What items are you going to take with you, identification, medicines, cloths, etc?
- When will you leave? What are your triggers to evacuate?
- Are you going to stay and defend? If so, what equipment will you need?
- Consider how you will determine when it's safe to stay and defend or when it becomes unsafe. What will your next steps be?
- Practice your plan. Take a drive to your planned safer area to see how long it takes to get there. This will help if the time comes to leave.
- Pets should be included in your plan. Is your safe area suitable for your pets too?
- Livestock and larger animals such as horses also need to be considered. How long will it take you to move your animals to safety?

Ember Proofing: Your home is a valuable asset and you can undertake many jobs around your home to help improve your bushfire safety and protect you from ember attack.

- Wall vents can be covered with metal fly wire, but never seal the vents totally.
- Ridge cappings are a constant problem and can be sealed using wire or silicon.
- Gaps around windows and doors can also be sealed with silicon.



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Bushfire Preparations in Winter

- Elevated decks and floors collect lots of debris this time of year so its handy to clear out grass and leaves and unwanted growth from these areas. If possible, consider filling in below the floor line with metal fly screen wire.
- Keep your roof gutters clean.

Equipment: If you live in a rural setting, it's a good idea to have some firefighting equipment to help protect your ember proofed home. Type and amount depend on what you are intending to defend, so think about the need for a petrol-powered pump and some hoses, and obviously, a good water supply.

- If you already have a pump, then consider having it serviced, or at least test run it to ensure it's going to work when you need it. Remember to attach your hoses and test them to ensure they are still in operational condition. Clean the hose nozzle, as these can collect debris and insects which block the holes and prevent water from flowing properly.
- Spot fires can be extinguished with a wet beater and a simple floor mop is a great option. These are economical and easy to obtain along with some large 10 or 20 litre buckets. Have several of them ready to use when the time comes.

Protective clothing: This is essential if you're going to stay and defend. Consider the items you might need:

- Cotton or other fire rated clothing, overalls or jeans. Never wear synthetics if you're defending
- Wide brim hat
- P2 dust masks



- Gloves
- Goggles or glasses
- Solid boots
- First aid kit with suitable supplies.

Even though it may be cold outside, frosty, raining, this is a perfect time to carry out some of these preparations. This way you won't need to do everything when fire season starts. When you are threatened by bushfire, it's too late to plan. As the old saying goes, "If you fail to plan, you plan to fail".

Bushfire Survival Plan templates are available online [here](#).

Browse the Bushfire-Ready Neighbourhoods site for a wide range of resources that will help you be fire safe fire.tas.gov.au/brn.

David Cleaver, Community Development Officer, North



Tasmania Fire Service

TasFire
EQUIPMENT

Is your business or home safe from bushfire?

We have a range of products to help protect you and your home from the threat of bushfires.

- Fire extinguishers
- Firefighting pumps and hoses
- Personal protective equipment
- Knapsacks and drip torches
- And more.

Check out our products online at tasfireequipment.com.au or visit one of our stores. Hobart, Youngtown or Burnie 1300 008 337



Tasmania Fire Service

fire.tas.gov.au/brn



Lachlan Brigade Fire Fighter works on a burning pine tree during asset protection on the Pelham Road fire

How social media can be used by Brigade members to engage residents in fire safety education

In the last three months there have been considerable challenges in engaging people in community fire safety education. However, restrictions on face-to-face engagement have led to opportunities to utilise free online platforms, such as Facebook (FB), for people to stay connected and continue to engage in a time of physical distancing.

Many volunteer brigades in Tasmania have Facebook pages. Some are very active and do it well, others have minimal content and could be doing more to engage their community.

Geeveston Brigade have been using FB for eight years. Their page has 2,054 followers and they use Facebook as a way of communicating fire safety messages.

“We share any information that is put on Facebook by Tasmania Fire Service, any fuel reduction burns we do around Geeveston & surrounds. We have two members that monitor the page and are usually on the ball when it comes to any information that needs to be reported. During the Riveaux Road Fire, it was so useful! As we have a lot of community members following our page. We just put information about the next bushfire community meeting on the page and it would be shared very fast around the town.”

Amelia Franklin, Second Officer & Junior Cadet Coordinator

Lachlan Brigade has been on FB for around five years and the key aim is fire safety, fire prevention and community information. The page also gives an insight into volunteer brigade life. Lachlan Brigade’s page has 2,070 followers with most posts averaging around 1,000 views.

“It’s important for communities to have confidence in their local brigade and therefore we use it to build our brigade reputation as ‘The Lachlan Rats’ - a quirky angle with the swamp rat as our mascot. We know that messaging has to be consistent with TFS messaging and the department Comms team are often looking at our page and if we’re not quite right on something, they will drop us a line.”

“The Lachlan Valley is behind Mount Wellington and therefore we are the last brigade before Wellington Range. We have a motto of ‘Protecting Hobart’s Backside Since 1983’ and while this is a tongue-in-cheek motto the Brigade knows if we lose a fire in Lachlan on a bad day, the next stop is Hobart. Therefore, we work hard to educate people in our Valley.”

“People use FB to contact us about property inspections, requests for fire safety information or they just ask questions using this platform. Without FB, we wouldn’t have that contact with our community.”

Phil Pyke, Volunteer Firefighter, Lachlan Brigade

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How social media can be used by Brigade members to engage residents in fire safety education

Facebook, as a free engagement solution, provides Brigades with many features that can engage their residents in fire safety messages and education. There is the traditional feature of a public forum for sharing official TFS social media campaigns, photos, discussions and comments. Others include:

- The Facebook Live feature can be used to broadcast a conversation, performance, Q&A or virtual event. Facebook Live can be done on a page, in a group or an event, and the live videos will also appear in followers' news feeds. If planning to utilise Facebook Live on a public page, advice should first be sought from DPFEM Media and Communications.
- Video presentations on a Facebook page can help to build greater engagement through an educational fire safety video.
- To monitor how people are engaging with a page, the Analytics feature helps an administrator understand the audience, post-performance and the health of pages. Analytics is a great way to see which content gets the best results for the page or group. This will help build a brigade's audience engagement.

DPFEM Media and Communications is responsible for content on the TFS Facebook page. Their tips for engaging with your community on social media include:

- Share posts from other official Tasmanian pages (TFS, Tasmania Police etc) (do not copy and paste the content and claim as your own, as you will get a better reach if you share it);
- Use your page as an engagement tool to encourage new members and promote local events, not for photos and information about incidents;
- Keep your messages clear, concise, check for spelling errors and make the content relevant to your audience;
- Stick to the TFS script – don't create your own safety messages; and
- If you are not sure what is right contact the team at Media and Communications through your District Officer.

Lesley King, Project Manager – Home Fire Risk Groups

Community Engagement Volunteer Talks

The 2020 Community Engagement volunteer workshops were postponed due to COVID-19. In their place we are providing the following workshops for TFS volunteers.

August: TFS key messages (webinar)

It's essential that you are 'on message' when promoting fire safety in the community. Get the low-down on TFS bushfire safety key messages with Coordinator Community Development, Peter Middleton.

Join us on Zoom. **7:00pm, Monday 17 August**

September: Disaster Resilience Education Tasmania (webinar)

Find out about this important resource to promote with teachers in your community. Lesley King, Project Manager Home Fire Risk Groups, will run through what DRET covers and how teachers can use it.

Join us on Zoom. **7:00pm, Wednesday 16 September**

October: Dealing with difficult behaviour

The Bushfire Ready Neighbourhoods team wants to start a conversation about dealing with difficult behaviour. We'll share links to resources from experts to kick start the conversation. We want to hear your tips and ideas too. Resources to be shared online.

November: Community engagement toolkit for volunteers (webinar)

Hot off the press, this toolkit is packed with resources to support the community engagement work you do. Join Community Development Officers Selina Young and Brett Patterson as they give you a run-down of this brand new resource.

Join us on Zoom. **7:00pm, Tuesday 10 November**

To register and find out more, contact your Regional Community Development Officer

[www.bushfirereadyneighbourhoods.tas.gov.au/
community-development-and-education-team](http://www.bushfirereadyneighbourhoods.tas.gov.au/community-development-and-education-team)



Tasmanian Emergency Management Training - TasEMT

TasEMT is a resource to enable people with emergency management responsibilities to:

- Increase your capability and capacity in an emergency event.
- Gain an introductory level of understanding of emergency management relating to each of the All Hazards phases of prevention, preparedness, response and recovery - PPRR.

The platform has numerous **features** which include:

1. Easy navigation directly from the [SES webpage](#)- Emergency Management tab.
2. A clear instruction landing page [TasEMT](#). Please read this introduction carefully before starting the TasEMT modules.
3. Key-M=Module Title P=Subpages within this module.
4. Free and accessible to everyone; no login required.
5. You can start and stop a module at any time without losing your place, as it is simple to navigate between the pages.

6. The modules are aligned with stakeholder responsibilities in the event of an emergency.

7. Tasmanian made videos are embedded throughout, featuring experts in Emergency Management. You will be redirected to the SES YouTube channel to view the videos. Press the back arrow to return to the module you are currently completing. This functionality will be improved so that each link will open a new tab on a new page. More information will be disseminated soon.

These modules are attributed to the Tasmanian State Emergency Service, Local Government of Tasmania (LGAT) and a key group of Tasmanian stakeholders that have played integral roles in the design, development and content of these modules. These stakeholders will continue to play an important role in disseminating current information to you regarding these modules and any relevant updates.

Additional modules are currently being developed. If you have any feed-back please email: louise.chesterman@ses.tas.gov.au



Check out the Disaster Resilience Education Tasmania online resources for teachers disasterresiliencetas.com.au.

1800 000 699
fire.tas.gov.au/brn
communityed@fire.tas.gov.au

