

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & EDUCATION > BUSHFIRE-READY NEIGHBOURHOODS NEWSLETTER



Issue 21 • Summer Edition • February 2021

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

This edition features:

- Mitigating bushfire risk – we all play a part
- Bushfire survival planning
- Pop up and stand out in your community this bushfire Season
- New Australian Warning System rolls out in Tasmania
- Stay connected with ABC in an emergency

Mitigating bushfire risk – we all play a part

TFS > Communities > Individuals

There are many different definitions of bushfire mitigation. In a nutshell, you could say it is about:

- Building community resilience
- reducing the risk of bushfires and their severity
- building capacity to prevent, respond to and recover from bushfires.

Some bushfire mitigation activities are managed by governments and the fire service, but many of them cannot be achieved without the support, help and involvement of the Tasmanian community.

Bushfire mitigation activities such as the [Fuel Reduction Program](#), [Community Bushfire Planning](#) and [Bushfire-Ready Neighbourhoods](#) are part of core business for TFS, but there are many other stakeholders involved in bushfire mitigation activities as well. Examples include the Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service and Sustainable Timbers Tasmania partnering with the Tasmania Fire Service in the Fuel Reduction Program; local councils contributing to reducing bushfire risk through slashing and weed management programs and preparing Municipal Emergency Management Plans to enable them to reduce risk to the community from the threat of bushfires and other emergencies; and utility providers protecting key infrastructure by maintaining asset protection zones (a buffer zone where the amount of vegetation (what we call fuel) is reduced, to name a few.

Fuel reduction burning is a well-known piece of the bushfire mitigation jigsaw puzzle. As the name suggests, fuel reduction burning aims to reduce the amount of fuel



available to burn in a bushfire so that bushfires are less likely to burn as quickly or intensely. Fuel reduction burns are planned strategically to protect communities, infrastructure and the environment. Fuel reduction burning will not prevent bushfires, but it can make them easier and safer for firefighters to control and manage.

A lot of bush in Tasmania is very accepting of fire and in some cases needs fire to reproduce, but in some areas the vegetation is sensitive to fire and can be permanently damaged or destroyed by fire. Alpine vegetation and cool rainforest species rarely survive a fire, and wet eucalypt forests generally need decades to centuries between one fire and the next. A lot of these fire-sensitive vegetation types will not burn during our safe planned burning seasons in spring and autumn, as they are too wet to burn. When they do dry out enough to burn, it is usually the driest part of mid to late summer and a planned burn is not a safe or viable option because there is a higher risk that the fire may burn out of control. Therefore, planned burns are not always an option when these vegetation types are close to towns and communities.

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Tasmania Fire Service

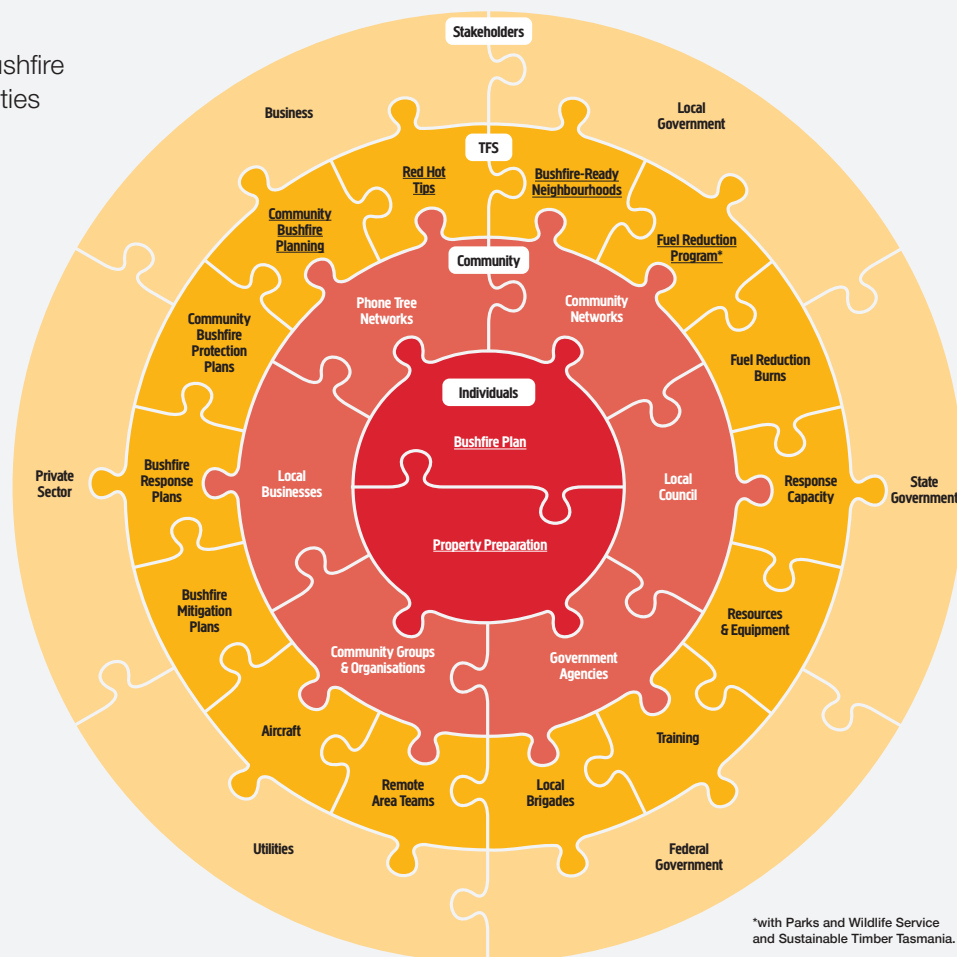
fire.tas.gov.au/brn

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Mitigating bushfire risk – we all play a part

FIGURE 1

Examples of bushfire mitigation activities



As we saw last bushfire season, just because a fuel reduction burn had been conducted in an area of bush, bushfires were still able to burn through the area in bad bushfire weather. Which brings us to other critical pieces of the bushfire mitigation jigsaw puzzle – **preparedness at the community and individual levels.**

At the **community level** this can involve local business and community groups supporting bushfire preparedness activities across the community. Community members may establish a formal group or an informal network to promote bushfire preparedness activities. Community members may establish a community-based early warning system (what we call a [phone tree](#)).

At the **individual or household level** this can involve many different activities that usually fall into two main categories – preparing a [bushfire-ready property](#) and preparing a [bushfire plan](#).

The fires last summer highlighted the need for individuals and households to be proactive and prepare themselves and their properties for bushfires. There is no guarantee that bushfire mitigation activities by TFS or other stakeholders will protect a community from bushfire – there is no 100% guarantee. Therefore, it is important for householders to do their own preparation as well.

When it comes to being ready for bushfires, **we all play a part** – no one agency, organisation, community, or individual has the capacity to reduce bushfire risk on their own.

*Kyle Squibb
Community Engagement Officer, North West
(Fuel Reduction Program)*

*Brett Patterson
Community Development Officer, North West
(Bushfire-Ready Neighbourhoods)*





**DO YOUR 5 MINUTE
BUSHFIRE PLAN NOW!**

BUSHFIRE WHY RISK IT?

fire.tas.gov.au 1800 000 699

 Tasmania Fire Service  Tasmanian Government

Bushfire survival planning

Bushfire survival planning has always been important for people who live in bushfire-prone areas.

Deciding whether you should leave early or stay and defend is a decision which needs to be considered when developing a Bushfire Survival Plan. It will depend on many factors such as your ability to defend, access to enough water and firefighting equipment, property preparedness and Fire Danger Ratings.

Tasmania Fire Service has developed a new bushfire survival planning tool to assist homeowners in this process with the introduction of the [5-minute plan](#). Available online at www.fire.tas.gov.au this plan, together with useful facts about bushfire planning and bushfire myths, is an easy-to-use tool to help answer all the questions you need to consider.

We encourage you to visit the website, complete your plan and encourage your communities to complete their plans online.

Many things remain the same, such as:

- Always ensure everyone in the home knows your plan details.
- Rehearse your plan and ensure you have considered travel times.

- Understand Fire Danger Ratings and how they fit into your plan.
- Know the locations of your Nearby Safer Places.
- Decide on your triggers to leave.
- Always include pets and livestock in your plan.
- Listen to ABC local radio for bushfire information and updates.
- Do not assume you will have electricity to power your devices.
- Develop an emergency kit with the items you want to take with you.

For more information about your bushfire safety, bushfire survival planning and property preparedness, visit the Bushfire-Ready Neighbourhoods website: www.bushfirereadyneighbourhoods.tas.gov.au

Dave Cleaver
Community Development Officer (North)

Pop up and stand out in your community this bushfire season

We are in Tasmania's bushfire season. The sun is (mostly) shining, stronger winds are here, and there is warmer weather through the day. This is a great time to engage your community about key messages on bushfire preparedness.

Many brigades prefer not to arrange community events during bushfire season. There is a possibility of the brigade getting a call-out to a bushfire, which could lead to cancelling the event as well as limited members available to support the event as it is also time to spend with family.

Pop-up stands may offer an alternative to a larger event during this busy time of year.

This bushfire season, Bushfire-Ready Neighbourhoods (BRN) and TFS brigades in BRN communities have held BRN pop-up stands throughout January, making some great connections and having focused conversations with local residents and shack owners. We have set up at popular lunch spots, outside and inside shops (whatever works for the business), coffee shops and local hotels, and where there may be large numbers of people walking past. The locations can be as creative as you can be. Remember to get local business and council approval (if required).

Pop-up stands can be a great activity for your brigade for the following reasons:

- You are taking the message to your community, held at popular local spots.
- Reaches people that may not attend other types of events.
- Can be arranged at short notice (e.g. after a fire weather day to benefit from mainstream media promotion of recent fire weather or after a fire in the state that sparked interest in your community).
- Advertising is simple and done on the day of the event – photo taken once set up and short paragraph of text can be pre-written.
- No need to cancel event if brigade is unable to attend (due to call-out) as not advertised before the day.
- Uses local social media pages – can promote event location and times, and can also advise if brigade leaves the stand for a call-out.
- Raises awareness of bushfire preparedness and BRN through local businesses and local councils.



TOP: Dodge's Ferry Fire Brigade volunteers at the Dodge's Ferry pop-up

ABOVE: Our pop-up display at Orford

- Can be held with only 1-2 firefighters (a plan should be made for packing up in case of call-out); a brigade support person may assist with this.
- Easy set-up/pack-up of stand – not many resources required.
- Truck can add visibility to the location if suitable.

If your brigade is interested in having a BRN pop-up stand, contact your regional Community Development Officer for guidance, assistance and resources.

Selina Young
Community Development Officer, South



KNOW WHAT TO LOOK FOR DURING AN EMERGENCY

As part of a new national warnings system, the way incidents are shown is changing. You'll see these icons on our website.

Know what to look for and know what to do.



EMERGENCY WARNING

This is the highest level of bush fire alert. You may be in danger and need to take action immediately. Any delay now puts your life at risk.



WATCH AND ACT

There is a heightened level of threat. Conditions are changing and you need to start taking action now to protect you and your family.



ADVICE

A fire has started. There is no immediate danger. Stay up to date in case the situation changes.

New Australian Warning System rolls out in Tasmania

In December TFS rolled out the first stage of the new Australian Warning System.

The changes include the way bushfire warnings are displayed on the TFS website and by our partners, including [TasALERT](#) and ABC. From 1 December, the colours and icons (diamond to a triangle) have changed to:

- Advice (yellow)
- Watch and Act (orange)
- Emergency Warning (red).

While the colours and icons have changed, the meanings of the levels have not, and incident controllers do not have to do anything differently when activating a warning level.

These changes are part of a nationwide review of the Australian Warning System. They are designed to bring

consistency across Australia to the way incidents are displayed, with most states and territories working towards implementing them this month.

Over time, the Australian Warning System will be used for other hazards like floods and storms.

In 2021, we will introduce further changes, including improvements to our warning messages and calls to action.

Further information about the Australian Warning System can also be found on the Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience website: <https://knowledge.aidr.org.au/resources/australian-warning-system/>

Peter Middleton
Coordinator Community Development





Your emergency broadcaster

abc.net.au/emergency



Stay connected with ABC in an emergency

The new [ABC Emergency website](http://abc.net.au/emergency) is your online destination for up-to-date emergency warnings and advice from across Australia.

Find incidents close to your location, or check on emergencies that may affect family and friends in other parts of the country. Every search will connect you with the nearest local [ABC Radio service](#), providing emergency coverage and information when it's needed most.

TFS Community Engagement Volunteer Workshops 2021

For existing community engagement volunteers and new interested volunteers.

REGISTRATIONS NOW OPEN

Know **YOUR** bushfire risk.
Make a plan.

South – Saturday 1 May

Contact: selina.young@fire.tas.gov.au

North West – Saturday 15 May

Contact: brett.patterson@fire.tas.gov.au

North – Saturday 5 June

Contact: david.cleaver@fire.tas.gov.au

1800 000 699

fire.tas.gov.au/brn

communityed@fire.tas.gov.au

