

# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & EDUCATION > BUSHFIRE-READY NEIGHBOURHOODS NEWSLETTER

Issue 11 • 2017 BRN in Action Edition • February 2018



## Squeaking Point – Bridging distant neighbours



*Squeaking Point Bushfire-Ready Neighbourhoods Property Assessment Day*

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

Welcome to edition number 11 of the Bushfire-Ready Neighbourhoods newsletter.

The theme for this edition is BRN in action.

- Squeaking Point – Bridging distant neighbours
- The Kettering Collective – Interview with Val Brown on the Kettering Fireguard
- Spotlight on Kelso and Greens Beach
- Narrowing the awareness-action gap: cultivating fire fitness as a social norm
- Bushfire behaviour
- Fire danger ratings

As we come to the end of Round 2 of Bushfire-Ready Neighbourhoods and the summer of 2017/18, it's a great time to acknowledge the work happening behind the scenes in communities working toward getting prepared. In the north west the spotlight lands on a group of people. Community Development Officer, Suzette Harrison, has been working within the community of Squeaking Point – a lovely little patch of the world close to Port Sorrell on the North West Coast. Suzette's work started with a Community Forum that was well attended with over 75 people present. As a result of that, a group of 11 people put their hands up to form a Bushfire-Ready Neighbourhoods Group that would work on broader community issues, as well as their own preparedness activities. One of those activities was a Property Assessment Field Day. This involved the group identifying 3 properties to be assessed and opening an invitation up to the community as a whole to come and learn about

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Tasmania Fire Service

[fire.tas.gov.au/brn](http://fire.tas.gov.au/brn)



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preparing properties more practically. This was a very successful day, enjoyed by all who attended. The feedback was so positive that the group are initiating another one this coming March. Please feel free to contact Suzette about this if it is in your area and you are interested.

Another activity the community have been working on is the development of their community owned and run Phone Tree system. This is not a small task for Squeaking Point as there are 200 plus properties, with many hours of foot slogging and door knocking in the area having already been completed. The details gained so far have been compiled into their draft Phone Tree structure, and they are looking to have a trial in coming months. As you can appreciate it takes some doing to coordinate all of those contacts into a structure that works if/when it is needed.

In Round 1 of the program, Suzette worked with the Golden Valley community and met a group of volunteers who wanted to develop a community Phone Tree in that area. As a result of this a man named Tony Deckers emerged as a community leader who took the idea and ran with its development. There was quite a bit of media coverage about its benefit to the community in the fires in 2016. Suzette's favourite quote came up out of that time when a resident said, 'I can go to sleep tonight because I know if there is anything to worry about with the fire, my phone will ring.'

Interestingly we are called Bushfire-Ready Neighbourhoods and recently, through the Phone Tree development, Suzette saw how neighbourhoods are reaching out across geographical distance and connecting in the preparation space. In one newsletter edition, Suzette wrote about the

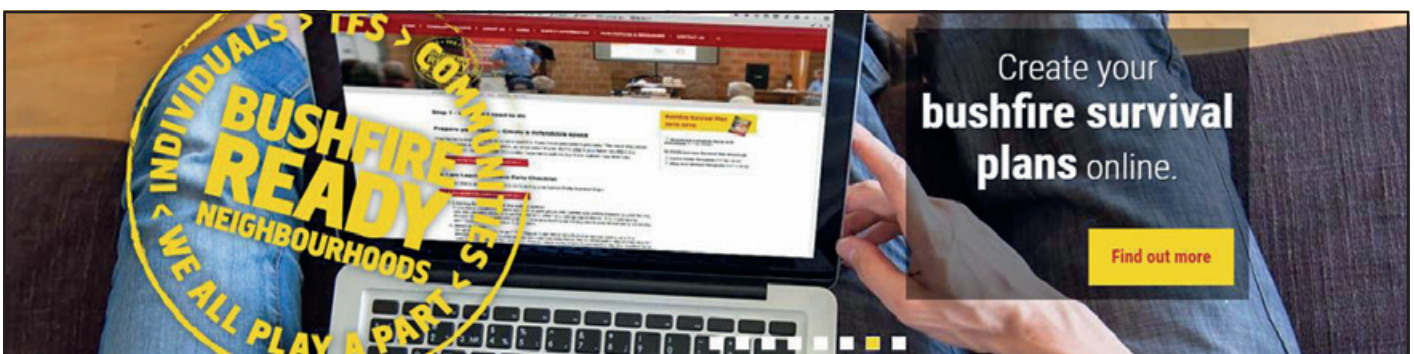


*Squeaking Point Bushfire-Ready Neighbourhoods Group*

work Tony had done and the consequent development of a website [www.ourphonetree.com](http://www.ourphonetree.com) that was specific to Phone Tree development. The person working on structuring the large Phone Tree for Squeaking Point was able to connect with Tony and access resources, tips, recording systems and experience, which ultimately helped him to draft their Phone Tree.

It is exciting and rewarding to engage with motivated communities, and to be the conduit assisting in making connections across distances for communities to connect. This is such a great thing because at the end of the day, no matter where we live in Tasmania, we all live in one of the most bushfire-prone areas of the world and are connected across distance in our shared risk to bushfire.

*Suzette Harrison  
Community Development Officer (North West/North)*



**By following four simple steps, you can create your own Bushfire Survival Plan/s.**

**Click on the link below to get started:**

**[www.bushfirereadyneighbourhoods.tas.gov.au/create-your-bushfire-survival-plans](http://www.bushfirereadyneighbourhoods.tas.gov.au/create-your-bushfire-survival-plans)**





*Bushfire-Ready Neighbourhoods community mapping*

## The Kettering Collective – Interview with Val Brown on the Kettering Fireguard

### How did the Kettering Fireguard groups kick off?

“Well it was in the early 2000s as I recall when I heard that a local resident a few streets away from me had organised a fireguard group for her street.

“I gathered residents’ contact information on my street. I think there were about 10 or so households on the list at that time. Then yearly we would have fire awareness sessions at the Kettering Hall. The local brigade would come along too. We would have quite interactive ways of relating important bushfire-ready information; like we showed what to wear and what not to wear when staying and defending a bushfire. Someone got up with a t-shirt, shorts and thongs as an example of what not to wear. I think these practical ways of sharing information of the bushfire risk sinks in more.

“It all started from there and just grew as people in the area learnt about what we were doing, they then wanted to start up their own group in their street and asked me to help them out. Pretty quickly there were 10 different groups.”

### So now in 2018 what are the Kettering Fireguard groups like?

“Now there are 12 fireguard groups. Leaders of these groups collectively manage up to 200 people in the Kettering area. Each group ranges from 10 to over 20 households. There are about 800 people in the greater Kettering area so I think over 200 households covered by the Kettering fireguard system is pretty good.

“There are now 21 households in my own group. If I need to let everyone in my group know about a local fire, I call the first person on our fireguard group list and then that person then calls the next. So the process follows the pattern of contacting the next on the list until the loop comes back to me.

“Each local fireguard group system is quite informal and each leader interacts with their own group differently. They have their own system of communicating with each other.

“We have a great relationship with the Channel Brigade who support us with information, and they come along and talk to us yearly at our fire awareness meetings. The current Brigade Chief, Peter Monshing, has been really helpful this past year or so with our groups and with the broader community by making himself available to provide information at various community meetings and running property preparedness workshops.”

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## Have the phone tree systems of the fireguard groups been tested?

“One year there was a bushfire at Coningham, a few kilometres to the north west of Kettering. If the wind had changed it may have been quickly in our area. At the time, as arranged, I did the call around to the leaders and then my own group. Later we had a meeting after that incident and we had a debrief session about how we thought the phone tree system went and shared how people’s own plans went. We had a conversation about what worked and what didn’t work. We realised how important it is to test plans and systems to see where the gaps are.”

## What are the benefits of grass roots groups such as the Kettering Fireguard?

“Residents in the fireguard groups are bushfire-ready, they are testing their equipment, they are informed, they are independent and not relying on emergency services to tell them what to do; because of course there is no guarantee a truck will turn up to your house so fireguard group members have the knowledge, skills and are connected to act early and quickly.

“Working together is important to communicate the right information, but ultimately you have to act out your own plan and look after yourself. People have to take responsibility for themselves and especially elderly people, they have to get out early. These groups are an early warning system. Phone trees have been used for a lost dog situation and can be useful for other local emergencies like storms and floods.”

## What do you see as the challenges for fireguard groups?

“Fireguard groups rely on a local community person driving it. Luckily I am retired and have the time and the passion to keep this going. Each year before bushfire season I ‘stir the pot’ and keep it going by motivating people to review and get their plan into action. I am passionate about this as I want people to be aware, as I see Kettering as a high bushfire risk area.

“Our system is not foolproof and perfect. At the moment many don’t have mobile phones, or they don’t have home phones, or if they do they are reliant on electricity which is not likely to be available in a big fire.”

## What do you see as important for these types of systems?

“Communication is so important. Keeping residents’ contact information up to date and making sure that there is a drill or the system is tested to make sure all the information is up to date and that the system works. It’s a good way to test and find what the gaps are. A drill would be good but I think some residents may think this is overkill.”

## Do you have any tips for others who may want to get groups going and keep them going?

“The secret ingredient is the coordinator and leader roles of groups. A person who can dedicate their time to be able to get it going and then keep it going. They have to be motivated each year to keep in touch with group leaders to make sure they are keeping information up to date if their own groups. If you put your hand up to take it on, you have to keep the momentum going and be active in keeping in touch, exchanging lists and being a liaison with the local fire brigade volunteers.

“Communication is a major part too. Keeping information simple, relevant and up to date and making it easy to understand and interesting. Meeting and communicating regularly with groups makes sure the momentum is maintained. Use the free TFS bushfire resources and link in with the local brigade to utilise their bushfire knowledge of the area.”

*Lesley King*  
Community Development Officer (South)

**For more information about setting up a bushfire-ready group in your community, contact the Bushfire-Ready Neighbourhoods team.**

**Community Safety... in your hands**

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## Spotlight on Kelso and Greens Beach



*Greens Beach Bushfire-Ready Neighbourhoods Property Assessment Day*

Bushfire-Ready Neighbourhoods has demonstrated its capacity to help communities achieve great outcomes in bushfire prevention, preparedness and response. Northern Community Development Officer David Cleaver said, “This is also one of the most satisfying parts of my role as a Community Development Officer.” David said, “I get to work with a wide range of community residents, businesses, local government representatives and other organisations.”

“Throughout Round 2 of the Bushfire-Ready Neighbourhoods program, I have worked with several communities including the communities of Greens Beach and Kelso, with very capable support from the Kelso Volunteer Brigade who attended every BRN event and also hosted several on station brigade activities.”

Collaboration with brigades, businesses and organisations also adds value to Bushfire-Ready Neighbourhoods

outcomes for communities. David said, “This round I have had the pleasure of working with Tamar NRM, with program coordinator Gill Basnett being integral to the success of BRN in Greens Beach.” Sharing resources, knowledge and skills from TFS Fuel Reduction Unit, Parks & Wildlife Service, Tamar NRM and Bushfire-Ready Neighbourhoods has provided a wide range of activities for the Greens Beach community, with a Bushfire Survival Planning workshop planned for the end of this month.

David said, “Events held at the Greens Beach Golf Club started in early 2017. The first community event was well attended, and residents heard from several speakers. Parks and Wildlife Officer Chris Emms presented information about the burning regimes and condition of Narrantapu National Park. Fuel Reduction Unit Planner, Chris Moore, presented information about FRU planned

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burns for the area, followed by Gill Basnett's presentation about flora and fauna, local species and how these are affected by and live with fire in the environment. Then it was my turn to discuss various aspects of bushfire property preparation, survival planning and fire behaviour. Our workshops were supported by the Greens Beach Golf Club Ladies who provided beautiful home-cooked catering for all. A highlight!

"In the following months, together with Tamar NRM, we presented and ran other events including an onsite property preparation workshop, visiting several local properties to discuss ember-proofing and creating a defensible space, types and options of firefighting equipment and defendability of houses in relation to fire danger ratings.

"During the same period, together with Kelso Brigade, we attended and participated in community events in the Kelso area including 'The Mess in the Paddock' at Yorktown and 'Point of Women' community day, where we discussed a wide range of bushfire issues with residents.

"Through this round of events in the Kelso and Greens Beach, communities have received community support and been provided a pathway for future improvements in residents' bushfire safety and preparedness. The collaboration between Bushfire-Ready Neighbourhoods, Tamar NRM, Kelso Fire Brigade and the communities has shown that together we can all build safer, resilient and more bushfire-aware communities. Thank you to everyone involved in the Greens Beach and Kelso communities for your assistance and participation in these important BRN events."

*David Cleaver*

*Community Development Officer (North)*



*Bushfire-Ready Neighbourhoods in action at Greens Beach*



*Greens Beach Bushfire-Ready Neighbourhoods Workshop*

## Narrowing the awareness-action gap: cultivating fire fitness as a social norm

A recent study proposes innovative ways for routine 'fire-fitness' to become a social norm to narrow the bushfire awareness-preparedness gap and thus save human lives. It identifies new, data-driven preparedness policies to help improve human safety in all hazard emergencies. Public preparedness for natural hazard events requires continual improvement. Addressing this with innovative public health policy and practices aims to more effectively manage the

impact of fire and worsening severe weather events on human populations.

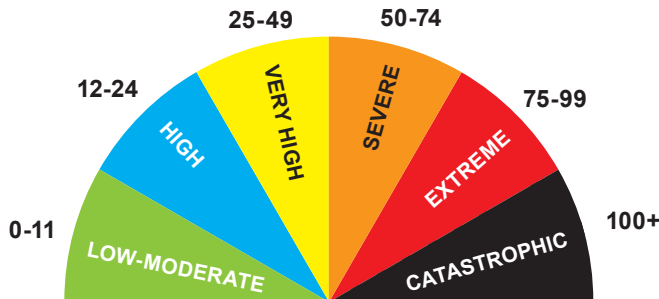
To view the article visit: <https://www.bnhcrc.com.au/publications/biblio/bnh-4390>

*Westcott, R. Narrowing the awareness-action gap: cultivating fire-fitness as a social norm through public policy initiatives. Australian Journal of Emergency Management 32, (2017).*



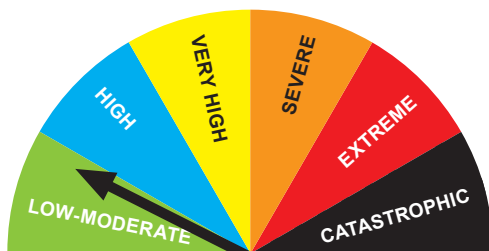


# FIRE DANGER RATINGS

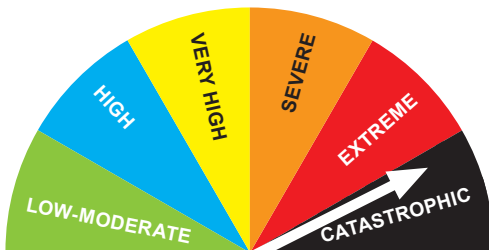


## Fire Danger Rating (FDR)

The Fire Danger Rating (FDR) warns of the potential impact of a bushfire on any given day, based on forecast weather conditions.



**LOW – MODERATE  
FDR 0-11**



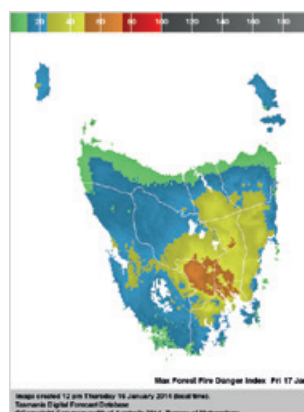
**CATASTROPHIC  
FDR 100+**

In spring, summer and autumn, regularly check the TFS website and the weather page in regional newspapers for current and updated Fire Danger Ratings. Check ABC local radio for fire weather warnings.

**We strongly urge you to take the time to review and understand the Fire Danger Ratings, so you can react appropriately to any FDR forecast.**

FIRE DANGER RATING	RECOMMENDED ACTION AND POTENTIAL FIRE BEHAVIOUR AND IMPACT
<b>CATASTROPHIC FDR 100+</b>	<p><b>ACTION: Leaving early is the safest option for your survival – regardless of any plan to stay and defend.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Most fires will be uncontrollable, unpredictable and fast moving. Flames will be higher than rooftops.</li> <li>Thousands of embers will be blown around.</li> <li>Spot fires will move quickly and come from many directions, up to 20 km ahead of the fire.</li> <li>Some people may die and be injured. Thousands of homes may be destroyed.</li> <li>Well-prepared, constructed and actively defended homes may not be safe during a fire unless firefighters have assessed them as defensible in the prevailing conditions.</li> </ul>
<b>EXTREME FDR 75-99</b>	<p><b>ACTION: Leaving early is the safest option for your survival. Only well-prepared, well-constructed and actively defended houses are likely to offer safety during a fire.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some fires will be uncontrollable, unpredictable and fast moving. Flames will be higher than rooftops.</li> <li>Thousands of embers will be blown around.</li> <li>Spot fires will move quickly and come from many directions, up to 6 km ahead of the fire.</li> <li>Some people may die and be injured. Hundreds of homes may be destroyed.</li> </ul>
<b>SEVERE FDR 50-74</b>	<p><b>ACTION: Leaving early is the safest option for your survival. Only stay if your home is well prepared and you can actively defend it.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some fires will be uncontrollable and move quickly. Flames may be higher than rooftops.</li> <li>Expect embers to be blown around.</li> <li>Spot fires may occur up to 4 km ahead of the fire.</li> <li>There is a chance some people may die and be injured. Some homes will be destroyed.</li> <li>Well-prepared and actively defended houses can offer safety during a fire.</li> </ul>
<b>VERY HIGH FDR 25-49</b>	<p><b>ACTION: Only stay if your home is well prepared and you can actively defend it.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some fires can be difficult to control. Flames may burn into the treetops.</li> <li>Expect embers to be blown ahead of the fire.</li> <li>Spot fires may occur up to 2 km ahead of the fire.</li> <li>There is a possibility people may die or be injured. Some homes may be damaged or destroyed.</li> <li>Well-prepared and actively defended houses can offer safety during a fire.</li> </ul>
<b>HIGH FDR 12-24</b>	<p><b>ACTION: Know where to get more information and monitor the situation for any changes.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fires can be controlled.</li> <li>Expect embers to be blown ahead of the fire.</li> <li>Spot fires can occur close to the main fire.</li> <li>Loss of life is highly unlikely and damage to property will be limited.</li> <li>Well-prepared and actively defended houses can offer safety during a fire.</li> </ul>
<b>LOW-MODERATE FDR 0-11</b>	<p><b>ACTION: Know where to get more information and monitor the situation for any changes.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fires can be controlled easily.</li> <li>There is little to no risk to life and property.</li> </ul>

## Fire Danger Rating Map



Daily fire weather outlook can be found at: [www.fire.tas.gov.au](http://www.fire.tas.gov.au) during the bushfire danger period.







# BUSHFIRE BEHAVIOUR



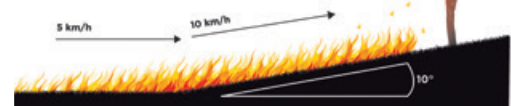
## Fire needs :

- Oxygen
- Heat
- Fuel.



## Fire speed and rate of spread will increase when burning uphill.

10 degree increase in slope can double a fire's rate of spread.



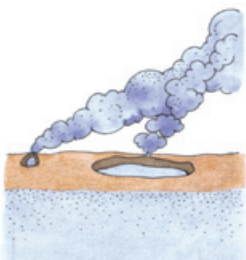
**Burning embers may rain down on your home and collect in corners and on flat surfaces. Trees help protect your house from ember attack.**



**Radiant Heat is the intense heat that radiates from a bushfire.**



## Types of Fire



### Ground Fire

Ground fires burn under the surface in peat humus, rich soils and through tree roots.



### Surface Fire

Surface fires are the most common. These fires burn surface vegetation, fallen trees and ladder fuels.



### Crown Fire

Crown fires can burn through treetops on days of higher Fire Danger Rating.

Source: Australasian Fire Authorities Council (AFAC)

Source: www.cfs.sa.gov.au

1800 000 699

[fire.tas.gov.au/brn](http://fire.tas.gov.au/brn)

[communityed@fire.tas.gov.au](mailto:communityed@fire.tas.gov.au)

