

COMMUNITY EDUCATION > BUSHFIRE READY NEWSLETTER

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Seasonal bushfire outlook for Tasmania

The Southern Australia Seasonal Bushfire Outlook 2016 shows a mixed picture for fire potential, with the exceptionally warm and wet conditions through winter likely to continue through spring. Every month of 2016 has seen Australia's national mean temperature above the long term average, although with the breakdown of El Niño, rainfall has been above average across most of the country, and winter has been the second wettest on record. The pattern of heavy rainfall following a strong El Niño is not uncommon and is tied to the warming of ocean waters around Australia. Spring is also likely to see above average rainfall across Tasmania.

The Outlook map shows the bushfire outlook for southern Australia through to the end of 2016.

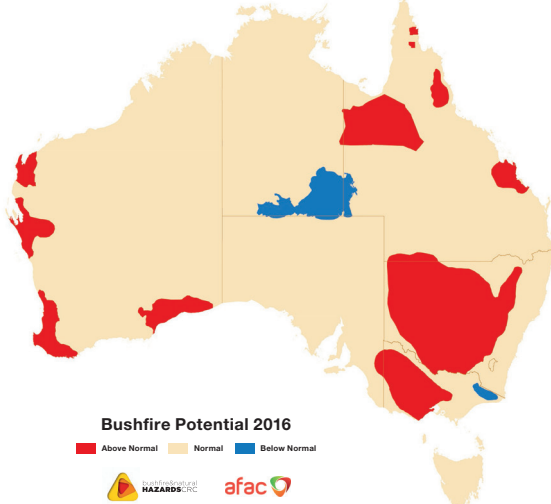
The Tasmania Fire Service is in preparatory mode for the season ahead. We need landowners to start preparing their own properties now, as bushfire readiness is a shared responsibility – if you own the property, you own the risk. Information about preparing your property is available at www.fire.tas.gov.au

Normal predictions for Tasmania does not mean it is a low risk situation, and we all need to remain vigilant – this is not a time to relax, because we will still have bushfires. Normal means that we may still get regular big bushfires, and we can expect a number of Total Fire Ban days and severe or extreme fire conditions over summer.

Download the Hazard Note at bnhcrc.com.au/hazardnotes/019

Peter Middleton, Coordinator – Community Development, Tasmania Fire Service

SOUTHERN AUSTRALIA SEASONAL BUSHFIRE OUTLOOK 2016



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

Welcome to edition number 7 of the Bushfire-Ready Neighbourhoods newsletter.

As we lead into summer, the theme for this edition is bushfire readiness.

- Seasonal bushfire outlook for Tasmania
- Fire protection ideas
- Preparedness through reflection
- Six steps to a safer summer
- Do's and don'ts on Total Fire Ban days
- Natural Disaster Resilience Grants Program

For more information on how to contact the team visit www.fire.tas.gov.au/brn



Tasmania Fire Service

fire.tas.gov.au/brn

Fire protection ideas with Tim Osborne

This is a brief summary of various fire protection ideas I have tried over 25 years of living on the slopes of Mt Wellington.

Long-range fire pumps

The standard fire pumps, such as Honda and Robin, come with smallish petrol tanks which run for perhaps 4 hours. I was interested to investigate options for larger fuel tanks. My initial thought was to buy a marine outboard fuel tank, but the critical difference is that an outboard engine has a fuel pump, which fire pumps do not. I then found a frame with a large inbuilt fuel tank, which was gravity feed. It was quite straightforward to mount a standard Robin fire pump into the frame. The runtime is now in excess of 10 hours.



Ember screen on fire pump

We simply folded a sheet of metal mesh into a box shape which fitted over the pump. It can be easily lifted off for re-fuelling or maintenance.

The supplier was Grating Tasmania, 45 Derwent Park Rd, Derwent Park.



Permanent sprinklers around house

We've installed 7 fixed sprinklers around the house which are connected to an underground 50 mm poly pipe. The sprinklers are supplied from one of the long-range fire pumps (above) and can keep the house wet for about 10 hours.



Hydrants

Another long-range fire pump supplies two hydrants which accept either 18 mm garden hose or 1" fire hose. There is a sign giving directions to the pump.

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Virtual stories

Watch out for the 67 bushfires storymap – goes live 1 December 2016
fire.tas.gov.au/brn/67fires



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Fire protection ideas with Tim Osborne

Inline sprinklers

We have a 10,000 litre galvanised steel water tank reserved for firefighting. (Plastic tanks are prone to melting in a bushfire.) This tank feeds a system of small sprinklers which are connected in series with 18 mm garden hose. The sprinklers are essentially standard garden sprinklers with a pass-through capability, but were modified with the addition of metal heads and 18 mm fittings. It can easily handle five or six sprinklers.



Downpipe blockers

These have not been so successful. The concept is that you close a slide gate which blocks the downpipe so that you can fill the gutters with water. The problem lies in the fact that the joint between the gutter and the downpipe (often between aluminium and plastic) was never intended to be a pressure joint and so leaks when the gutter is full of water. Also they are expensive devices, approximately \$75.

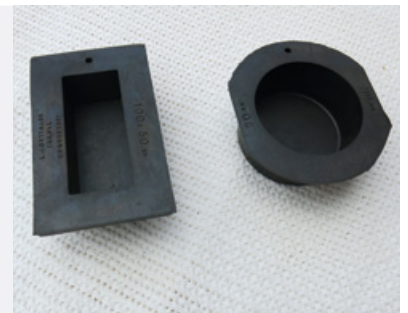
Supplier is TasFire Equipment, 16A Brisbane St, Hobart.



Downpipe plugs

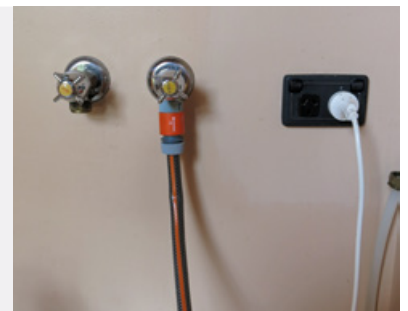
These are a recent find due to the issue with the blockers (above), and I haven't yet had time to test them properly, but I think they will do the job. They are called Dettmann Gutter Plugs and are made in Melbourne. Approximately \$25.

The supplier is Reece Plumbing, 36 Browns Rd, Kingston.



Internal hose

This is a great idea, but I forget where I got it from. It's based on the simple idea that the washing machine cold water tap is the same fitting as a garden tap, and so a standard garden hose will fit it. We keep a hose permanently in the laundry, which is long enough to get to any point in the house. It sounds like desperation – fighting a bushfire from within the house – but it might be a lifesaver.



Instructions

We have written a simple guide to the firefighting resources available at the house. We have given copies to our two immediate neighbours and also leave a copy near the front door, in case we are not here when a fire threatens.



Six steps to a safer summer

- 1** Know your risk – learn whether you live in a bushfire-prone area.
- 2** Understand your local environment and your options should a bushfire occur – to leave early, or to stay and defend your home.
- 3** Check the TFS website (fire.tas.gov.au) regularly for the following:
 - a.** Advice on how to prepare for bushfires.
 - b.** Current and expected fire danger ratings. They indicate how bad fires will be if they start, and should guide what action you will take on fire danger days.
 - c.** Bushfire alerts and warnings – in case a fire breaks out near you.
 - d.** Where your local Nearby Safer Places are for shelter. These are listed in the Community Bushfire Protection Plan for your area.
 - e.** Information on ‘Total Fire Bans’ and what you can and can’t do with fires when bans are in force.
- 4** Prepare a Bushfire Survival Plan. Your plan should include everyone who lives with you or is relying on you to keep them safe, as well as any pets or livestock. Talk today with your family and your neighbours about your bushfire survival plan and what you will do.
- 5** Even if it is not a day of Total Fire Ban, think of the weather conditions and use common sense when doing anything that could start a fire.
- 6** Some bushfires are started by arsonists. If you see anything suspicious – no matter how insignificant – immediately call the police (phone 000).

Do’s and Don’ts on Total Fire Ban days

MONITOR Total Fire Ban warnings through daily newspapers, television, radio and the TFS website (fire.tas.gov.au).

BE aware that a Total Fire Ban usually lasts for 24 hours.

DON’T use tools and equipment in the open air that generate sparks, such as for grinding, welding and cutting metal, or that use a naked flame.

DON’T operate barbecues that use wood, charcoal or other solid fuel (these are all banned during Total Fire Bans).

ONLY use gas and electric barbecues and follow the strict conditions set out on the TFS website.

If bushwalking or camping, **ONLY** use gas-fuelled cooking appliances, providing they are clear of any flammable material for at least one metre.

MINIMISE non-essential water use including garden-watering or lawn sprinklers. This will help ensure that firefighters and residents who may be facing a bushfire have water for fighting the fire.



Preparedness through reflection (north west)

It is that time of year again when we all need to be thinking about the preparations for summer. It is hard at the moment to think about bushfires when there has been so much flooding across our state, but perhaps something to remind us is to think not too far back to January this year. We have seen that our weather can bring unpredictable events that can trigger bushfires, such as on 13 January this year where upwards of 1000 lightning strikes made landfall mainly across the North West, West Coast and the Central Plateau.

Having lived on the North West Coast all of my life, I cannot remember a time when so much of the NW was on fire at any one time, and for such an extended period. It reminded me personally that we cannot rest on the assumption that it won't happen to us, but rather need to plan for when it will happen.

Round one of the Bushfire-Ready Neighbourhoods (BRN) work has been completed, and we are beginning work on Round 2. Examples of preparedness activities included:

- Weegenaheld a Property Assessment Field Day, where District Officer Paul Hill came out and looked at individual properties and gave tips on creating a defensible property.
- Golden Valley developed a phone tree system for their community and were able to use it when the Lake McKenzie fire was happening this year. You can have a look at the work they have done at www.ourphonetree.com
- Rocky Cape had a Bushfire Awareness Information session at the shacks area in the National Park where they had conversations about leaving early due to their one road in and out.
- Strahan had two Bushfire Survival Planning workshops, where each person looked at what they needed to consider in their leave early kit. They also looked at the requirements of preparing their properties to be defensible, whether they chose to stay and defend or not.
- Jackeys Marsh have been working on a project so that the community can have access to water when they are undertaking controlled registered burns on their properties.
- Sisters Beach have also been working on a phone tree system for the area of Sisters Beach Road focussing on the Banksia Park and Lake Llewellyn areas.



District Officer Paul Hill speaking at a Property Assessment Field Day held at Weegenah



A Bushfire Awareness Information session, Rocky Cape, at the shacks area in the National Park





Sisters Beach Road Community Phone Tree group

So as you can see, preparedness takes many forms, but begins by looking at your own individual Bushfire Survival Plans.

Round 2 of the BRN program is starting, and I have been busily engaging with the communities I will be working with to explore and get an understanding of the local knowledge in the area. In Round 2 I am working with King Island, Squeaking Point, Zeehan and Rocky Cape to Cowrie Point catchment, including Detention River, Hellyer Beach, Edgcombe Beach and Crayfish Creek. As this process begins, I will be rolling out a series of Information Sessions and Forums across each area. The beginning part of this engagement in each community is to start to share the message of sharing the responsibility in managing the risk of bushfire.

The more you can...

- develop your own resources such as emergency kits, leave early kits, stay and defend kits;
- ensure the people in your circle of influence are on the same page with the decisions about when to leave early and where to go;
- do the maintenance activities around your home so that your home is defensible;
- develop plans that include your animals;
- have a good understanding of what staying to defend and facing a bushfire will demand of you both physically and psychologically;

- have a plan b considering alternative routes of leaving;
- know what your triggers are for leaving.

... the more you will be able to better manage the risk of not *if* a bushfire happens, but *when*.

I look forward to meeting you in the communities of Round 2, and am excited about the potential to work alongside motivated community groups developing tools to enhance their resilience. Be sure to check out the Community Events area of the BRN section of the TFS website for details of community preparedness activities. fire.tas.gov.au/brn

Suzette Harrison, Community Development Officer N/NW, Tasmania Fire Service

Natural Disaster Resilience Grants Program (NDRGP)

The NDRGP is a competitive grants program that aims to support Tasmanian communities to implement the National Strategy for Disaster Resilience (NSDR) and strategic priorities outlined in the State Emergency Management Committee (SEMC) Strategic Directions Framework. The NDRGP will promote innovation through a focus on building partnerships between sectors, and will encourage regional or local area approaches to develop the capacity for communities to prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from emergencies.

The NDRGP recognises that disaster resilience requires a shared responsibility approach. Accordingly, the implementation of the NSDR, the TSNDRA, and the SEMC strategic priorities cannot be achieved by emergency management agencies alone, but rather by governments, communities, businesses and individuals working together.

Applications have now opened for 2016 and will close on Friday 18 November 2016.

For more information visit: ses.tas.gov.au/h/em/funding/ndrgp

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