

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & EDUCATION > BUSHFIRE-READY NEIGHBOURHOODS NEWSLETTER



Issue 13 • Get Ready Edition • September 2018

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

Welcome to edition number 13 of the Bushfire-Ready Neighbourhoods newsletter. The theme for this edition is Get Ready for the Bushfire Season:

- BRN concludes round 2 and kicks off round 3
- Introducing round 3 in the North-West and Central North

- Get ready for the bushfire season
- Property preparedness videos
- Burning to plan workshop
- Bushfire property assessments
- Enhancing public information practice in Tasmania's emergency services (TFS and SES)
- Fuel Reduction Program
- Bushfire-Ready Schools.

BRN concludes round 2 and kicks off round 3

In June 2018, the multinational award-winning Bushfire-Ready Neighbourhoods program (BRN) had been in full operation for five years. BRN is a community-based prevention and preparedness program for bushfire-prone communities across Tasmania.

In June 2018, BRN concluded round 2 of the program (July 2016 to June 2018). Round 2 of the program involved working intensively with 22 core communities statewide, as well as supporting dozens more.

Round 2 outputs included:

- Between August 2016 and June 2018, a total of 4,392 people participated in BRN activities
- 211 community development activities were conducted
- The program supported brigades to develop their capacity for community engagement
- A total of 631 TFS volunteers and 246 officers participated.

The BRN program continued to work with sectors and groups at risk including tourism, preventative health, community services, people over the age of 65 and people with disabilities. One of these key partnerships was the collaboration between the Tasmanian Visitor Information Network, TFS and SES.

Outcomes identified by *Myriad Research* (independent social research company) from a longitudinal evaluation of round 2:

- Over 7 in 10 households in the participating BRN communities reported having a bushfire survival plan at the conclusion of round 2
- Households reported that they are more likely to leave early in the event of a major bushfire situation
- Those that were aware of the BRN program were significantly more likely to have a higher level of household preparedness than those not aware of the program
- Respondents were more aware of the BRN program in the post-survey compared with the pre-survey, with healthy levels of involvement across the surveyed communities
- Those involved in the BRN program provided many positive comments, reflecting changes in household behaviour.

North-West region highlight

The uptake and development of phone tree early warning systems at Sisters Beach, Jackeys Marsh and Squeaking Point have been implemented as systems of contact to empower the community to develop situational awareness and be proactive in being prepared. All systems are using annual testing to promote the 'time to start preparing', so the phone tree holds a dual purpose of early warning and of promoting the preparedness message.

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BRN concludes round 2 and kicks off round 3 Continued from page 1

Northern region highlight

Collaboration with Tamar Natural Resource Management has provided a wide range of expert resources and extended the reach of BRN to other groups such as Tasmanian Land Conservancy and Tasmania Parks & Wildlife Service. This has included bushfire survival planning workshops, burning to plan workshops and property assessment field days.

Southern region highlight

Attendance by Dolphin Sands residents at events was higher than expected. TFS volunteer brigade members were a key liaison with SES, Neighbourhood Watch and committee members of the local ratepayers group. Swansea brigade achieved considerable community

engagement in bushfire risk by supporting the community group to manage a pump trailer for mitigation burns, and to coordinate emergency water tanks, safety signage and a pre-incident triage disc identifier system on gates.

Based on the research and evidence, round 2 of the BRN program has continued to have the desired effect. Community members have been engaged with the program activities, have completed bushfire survival plans, and have engaged in community development activities to build resilience and undertake bushfire prevention and preparedness activities.

Since its inception in 2009, the BRN program has worked in a targeted way with more than 100 communities statewide.

Peter Middleton, Coordinator Community Development

Introducing round 3 in the North-West and Central North

Here we are again starting a new round of BRN activities in communities. In the North-West and North there are some activities from Round 2 in Squeaking Point and Zeehan that will continue into 2019. There are exciting projects happening in both these areas – from a large complex phone tree system being developed at Squeaking Point to a collaborative community event in Zeehan being combined with a Museum open day. Be sure to keep an eye on the BRN website '[Community Events](#)' link for updates.

After the consultation process undertaken for Round 3, four new communities have been identified as areas where Suzette Harrison (Community Development Officer) will focus activities for the period 2018 – 2020. These areas are: Liffey Valley and Reedy Marsh in the Central North, and Granville Harbour and Marrawah/Redpa on the West Coast. These areas are diverse and unique in their locations and topography, from heavily vegetated areas with one road in and out, to places of geographic isolation. Some places have local meeting places and community icons, for example the Marrawah Tavern, while others have no central gathering point at all such as Reedy Marsh.

All of these communities are unique in so many ways but share a common risk from bushfire. Suzette looks forward to the initiation of BRN in new areas, and the opportunity to work alongside people wanting to do proactive things in their own areas and communities. The whole aim of the



new BRN round is to harness the 'one size does not fit all' approach and to move into a new area with anticipation and respect.

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



Get ready for the bushfire season

With spring upon us, it is time to start thinking about getting our bushfire survival plans ready. This year, we encourage everyone to take a moment to think about what has happened with the bushfire tragedies in Greece, North America, and the early start to the bushfire season in NSW. This is a sad reminder of the critical importance of planning for the risk of bushfire. When you are developing, rehearsing and sharing your plan with your family, think about putting together an emergency kit. What do you need in it? What are the important things you can have ready to go? Items like:

- wallet/purse with money and credit cards
- medications, toiletries you might require
- phones and chargers
- emergency contact numbers/details
- birth certificates, bank details and other important documents

- photos and significant personal items
- water, food and clothes for the trip or if you get stuck somewhere
- first aid kit
- portable battery operated radio
- items for any pets including cat carriers, seat belts and leads for dogs, food, water and any medications for animals, and be sure your pet is wearing an identification tag.

It only takes a small amount of your time to assemble your kit and have it ready to go by your door, or even in the boot of your car. As we reflect on the stories of loss in Greece and North America, it is a reminder of how ferocious and unrelenting a bushfire can be. Help yourself, your family and your loved ones and get ready now.

Click [here](#) to see the BRN Emergency Kits Fact Sheet.

Bushfire Myth:

I will have time to get out.

Truth:

Bushfires can be devastating, unpredictable and fatal. In the recent bushfires in Greece, community members were quoted as saying, “the flames come upon them in a blink of an eye” and “...the flames were chasing us all the way to the water” (ABC, 2018).



These easy to follow video guides on the 8 aspects of property preparedness will give you the tips and tricks to being better prepared for the bushfire season.

NEW Property preparedness videos

Now is the time to prepare for the bushfire season. BRN has developed a series of video guides on the eight aspects of property preparedness. Check them out by clicking [here](#).

Lesley King, A/Project Manager, Disaster Resilient Schools, and Peter Middleton, Coordinator, Community Development



Burning to plan workshop

July saw the second annual running of Tamar Natural Resource Management's (NRM) *Burning to Plan* workshop. It was led by Tamar NRM's program coordinator Gill Basnett with co-presenters Anna Povey of the Tasmanian Land Conservancy, BRN Community Development Officer David Cleaver, and Stephen Bresnehan from the Fuel Reduction Program.

The one-and-a-half day workshop brought together over 30 landowners from 23 properties at the TFS Youngtown facility to develop plans for their own properties to cover bushfire risk management, preparedness, ecology and how prescribed burning could be used in their individual situations. Many of the properties had conservation

covenants, so a good deal of the workshop focussed on developing a fire plan that would meet the requirements of the DPIPWE Private Land Conservation Program.

The workshop presenters spent time with all participants, working through the idiosyncrasies of each property and guiding the collation of written plans and annotated maps that the participants could take home at the end.

Anna Povey has written a description of the event, which you can read on the TLC website by clicking [here](#).

Stephen Bresnehan, A/Community Development Officer (South)



L-R up the front: BRN's Stephen and David, and Gill Basnett from Tamar NRM



Anna Povey (Tasmanian Land Conservancy)



Fire planning- a work in progress

Bushfire property assessments

Have you ever been asked by community members for advice on property preparedness, ember proofing, creating defensible space and other bushfire topics?

The purpose of property assessments is to identify hazards or risks around properties if they are threatened by bushfire. Assessments are generally conducted by TFS brigades and staff and they can be undertaken with groups of community members or on individual residences. Most properties have very similar issues in relation to preparedness. Assessed on 8 criteria, property assessments generally consider the following areas:

Defendable Space - This is the vegetation modified area around a house which provides a safe area to work in and minimises exposure to radiant heat and direct flame impact.

Vegetation Management - Inner and outer zones, sometimes referred to as Asset Protection Zones, include the defendable space. These areas may have vegetation and other flammable materials, but these have been modified to reduce fire activity should a fire threaten.

Water Supply - Sounds like an obvious thing to have if you live in the bush – but can you access it, is it going to be threatened by the fire, and how much water is available? TFS recommends a minimum of 10,000 litres dedicated to fire fighting and it should have either a 64mm 5v thread outlet or a 65mm Storz coupling. Both are available from [Tas Fire Equipment](#).

Access - When fire trucks need to enter a property, it is essential that there are no overhanging trees or vegetation that will cause damage or prevent access. There also needs to be room for trucks to turn around onsite. Making sure a property is easily identifiable is another crucial aspect.

House Maintenance & Improvements - Ember proofing is a critical component of preparing a property. Moving flammable items away from the house is a constant maintenance issue. However, residents also need to consider measures for protecting against radiant heat.



Kelso property assessment

This goes with creating a defensible space. Pre-summer can be a good time to complete any burning. Always register your burn with TFS – 1800 000 699.

Maintenance Activities - During fire season it's important to keep gutters clean, test and prepare firefighting equipment and check [emergency kits](#).

Awareness of Personal Capacity - Residents need to understand what defending a property may be like and consider whether they are actually capable of defending it.

Potential Hazards - Hazards near and around properties can vary – items such as gas cylinders, electrical connections and neighbouring vegetation all need to be considered.

This is a brief outline of the areas for discussion with residents – the outcomes of assessments can be beneficial to your bushfire survival planning.

Other factors to consider include your intentions to “Leave Early” or “Stay and Defend”, whether the property is on a slope and whether there is neighbouring or surrounding vegetation.

Interested in learning more about property assessments? [Contact](#) your regional Community Development Officer.

David Cleaver, Community Development Officer (North)

Bushfire Myth:

I don't need to prepare my property for a bushfire because emergency services will come and assist me.

Truth:

Emergency services only have so many resources, so we cannot be relied upon in times of major bushfires. Emergency services will prioritise resources for prepared properties, as they are likely to be more defensible and safer for our firefighters.



Enhancing public information practice in Tasmania's emergency services (TFS and SES)

TFS Coordinator, Community Development, Peter Middleton is currently undertaking a Masters Research project aimed at public information in the response phase of emergencies. TFS and SES use the Australasian Inter-Service Incident Management System (AIIIMS) for incident management. Through the application of AIIIMS in training, policy and incident response, TFS and SES have been able to build trust and confidence with the community and between services.

Arguably, it was following the devastating Victorian Black Saturday Bushfires in 2009 where 173 people died that the profile of public information in Australia was raised. The Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission (Parliament of Victoria, 2010) recommended (*Recommendation 14*) that fire agencies alter AIIIMS to acknowledge and give greater authority to public information, placing it on the same level as the operations, planning and logistic functions of incident management. It was from this point that public information during the response phase became a greater priority for emergency services (AFAC, 2011). The Royal Commission recommended that a public information unit (similar to operations, planning and logistics units within AIIIMS) be established as its own section during major response incidents.

This recommendation set national priorities, with fire and emergency services across Australia prioritising the issuing of alerts and warnings and protecting vulnerable people as their top operational priorities. The Royal Commission findings stated that public information in its form up until



Community liaison

2009 failed to "...reflect the quantity, demands and priority surrounding information management in the 21st Century" (Parliament of Victoria, 2010).

An indicative baseline of current public information knowledge and practice within TFS/SES has been established through a survey of 31 employees from TFS/SES involved in all areas of public information.

A literature review has analysed contemporary public information delivery during the response phase and what may be considered as best practice for enhancing public information. The literature is now being analysed alongside the survey data to provide recommendations for the enhancement of public information for the TFS/SES.

Peter Middleton, Coordinator, Community Development

Fuel Reduction Program - preparing for spring 2018

While you're preparing for the coming bushfire season, the Fuel Reduction Program will be doing its bit to manage bushfire risk as well. While autumn is usually the best time of year to conduct prescribed burns, carefully planned and timed spring burning can be just as effective. In some situations where autumn burning is highly restricted, spring can be the only part of the year available for fuel reduction burns.

To keep an eye on burning activities around the state, visit the 'What's Burning Now' link at the TFS website by clicking [here](#).

Stephen Bresnehan, A/Community Development Officer (South)



Orford last autumn- a big and complex burn



Bushfire-Ready Schools

Bushfire-Ready Schools is a Tasmania Fire Service bushfire safety initiative to promote community resilience to bushfire, through supporting education centres in bushfire-prone areas to manage their risk. This is important to the Tasmania Fire Service because:

- School children are a vulnerable section of our community;
- Schools are a key community asset, often central to a community; and
- Schools have a duty of care to provide a safe workplace for staff and students.



Comprehensive School Safety Framework: The Three Pillars

Goals of Comprehensive School Safety:

- Protect students and educators from death, injury and harm in schools
- Plan for continuity of education through all expected hazards and threats
- Safeguard education sector investments
- Strengthen risk reduction and resilience through education.

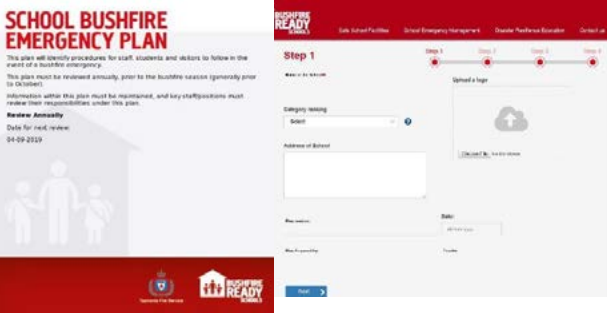
[\(UNISDR United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, Global Alliance for Disaster Risk Reduction and Resilience in the Education Sector\)](#)

PILLAR 1: Safe Learning Facilities



School buildings are assessed for the capacity to resist bushfire attack and provide protection for people sheltering on-site. Tailored bushfire risk mitigation strategies are designed for the site and detailed in the Bushfire Assessment Report. Schools are then supported with implementing these mitigation strategies to achieve improved bushfire safety and resilience outcomes. The BRS category indicates the school's susceptibility to bushfire attack mechanisms, and capacity to provide shelter from the life-threatening effects of radiant heat.

PILLAR 2: School Emergency Management



The Bushfire Emergency Management Plan for a school includes key considerations for choosing the most appropriate emergency response (evacuate or shelter-in-place) to keep staff and students safe during a bushfire. The online bushfire planning tool can be used to guide the development of a comprehensive and individually tailored emergency management plan for a school site. For more information about Bushfire-Ready Schools head to our website:

www.bushfirereadyschools.com.au

PILLAR 3: Disaster Resilience Education



Disaster Resilience Education aims to build students understanding of the causes, nature and effects of hazards while also fostering a range of competencies and skills to enable them to contribute proactively to the prevention and mitigation of disaster. They create opportunities for students to take specific and measurable actions in their own households, schools and broader community.

AIMING TO BUILD RESILIENCE AND CAPACITY

IN BUSHFIRE PREVENTION, PREPAREDNESS AND
RESPONSE WITH AT RISK TASMANIAN COMMUNITIES



2018-20 PRIORITIES



REEDY MARSH



GRANVILLE HARBOUR



LUCASTON



ANSONS BAY



GLADSTONE



CRABTREE

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