



HUFF STUFF

Newsletter

Issue 51

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Greetings everyone,

Winter is nearly upon us. The recent cold snaps and colder nights are making us aware of her imminent arrival.

HUFF Survey

The deadline for survey responses has now passed and we are in the process of collating your responses. This process is being undertaken by an external researcher. I'm hoping to report some findings in the next newsletter. A big thank you to all of you who took the time to provide feedback on the HUFF program and how it worked or didn't work in the Black Summer Bushfires.

Animals and Emergency Situations

Do you have a plan for your pets and/or animals?

I recently read the following statistics:

There are almost 29 million pets in Australia today - more than the estimated human population of 25 million. Three in five Australian households have a pet. 61% of Australian households have a pet today. Pet ownership rates are higher in Australia than many other countries around the world. The latest available statistics from the United States indicate that 57% of American households have pets, while only 40% of households in the United Kingdom are estimated to have pets.

The Bushfire and Natural Hazard Cooperative Research Centre recently published an article reminding us that during a disaster we are responsible for the safety of our animals, whether that is one cat or hundreds of cattle.

Bush fire research indicates that animal ownership contributes to delaying evacuation or failing to evacuate during a bush fire.



Horses near Bilpin during the Gospers Mountain fire in December 2019

The Bushfire and Natural CRC are working closely with communities to create new groups called Animal Ready Communities (ARCs). The aim of these groups is to foster closer bonds between animal owners and emergency services. The first group created was in the Blue Mountains called Blue Animal Ready Community (Blue ARC) because, as we are all well aware, our region is regarded as one of the most bush fire-prone areas in the world.

Several NSW RFS brigades across the Blue Mountains are now using the resources developed by Blue ARC which support communities with better awareness, preparedness, planning and responses for companion animals, livestock and native wildlife.

NSW SES have produced a website called Get Ready Animals (www.ses.nsw.gov.au/get-ready-animals) which is a one-stop-shop for managing animals during disasters, providing guides on animal emergency plans, checklists for grab-and-go bags for pets, resources to help care for wildlife impacted by disasters and much more information.

In addition to this website, there is a booklet designed specially to help people in the Blue Mountains prepare themselves and their animals for an emergency called Keeping Your Animals Safe in an Emergency. This booklet can be found at: www.bnhcrc.com.au/research/animalsindisasters



NSW RFS crew rescue goats from the Bees Nest fire near Armidale in September 2019

Until the next newsletter, take care of yourselves
Regards Cornelia