



HUFF STUFF
Newsletter
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Greetings everyone,

I hope you are all coping with the recurring heat waves. Please be aware of any neighbours who may not tolerate the extreme temperatures and if you can, drop in or give them a ring and ask if they are okay and ... be thankful that we don't live in the western suburbs! The heat will soon be over.

Luckily there have been no significant fire events for us. There was a smallish fire started by a lightning strike in Megalong Valley but again it was quickly brought under control.



The burnt out area was about 1 hectare.



Here you can see the damaged tree that started the fire.

The extreme weather on the weekend didn't deter people from bushwalking, camping, rock climbing and canyoning. During a routine patrol with our RFS brigade we came across a young girl walking towards Perrys Lookdown. She had travelled up from Sydney on the train and had no idea how far it was from the station, and no idea about the Total Fire Ban or the weather conditions. I guess this must be typical of many people unfamiliar with the mountains but it was certainly an eye opener. We suggested she change her plans for the day and redirected her to the less isolated Govetts Leap. The RFS were also involved in two carry outs, one at Minihaha Falls in Katoomba and the other at the Grand Canyon here in Blackheath. A very hot exercise for all involved. Yesterday I was part of a crew sent out to assist with the aftermath of the devastating fire out of Mudgee. Crews from all over the state will be working in that area for the rest of the week at least. It was sad to see the destruction caused by this fire.



Looking across from burnt grasslands at Wollar, near Mudgee into National Park space on Valentine's Day.



NPWS personnel mopping up alongside RFS members after the helicopter had doused a very hot fire(as you can see from the scorched earth) in National Park in the Kains Flat area near Mudgee.

Stay or Go ? 'That is the question'

When discussing fire plans the first question often asked is regarding whether people are going to stay and defend their home, or leave early. The RFS states that leaving early is the best option because staying alive is the ultimate goal, and no one would disagree with that. Here are some interesting points to think about from 'Essential Bushfire Safety Tips' by Joan Webster OAM.

Stay/Go Data

- Experiencing any bushfire can be traumatic.
- On any day, staying can be dangerous to those unaware of bushfire dangers.
- On extreme days, staying can be life-threatening unless you are thoroughly prepared.
- On most days, well-prepared homes can provide safe shelter for 'stayers'.
Stayers who have died have usually not known how to do so safely.
- On most days, well-prepared people can safely defend well-prepared homes.

- Even on extreme days, thoroughly prepared people have saved their homes.
- A great many have been saved even on such extreme days as Black Saturday.
This is a hidden fact: - seldom publicized through media, through misplaced ideas of newsworthiness; seldom by those achieving it, through misplaced feelings of guilt.
- At least two able-bodied, well prepared adults are usually needed to safely defend.
- Research shows the house survival rate more than doubles when someone is present. *If the people there are fit and know what to do, the house survival rate can be 90%.*
- Early-enough and careful evacuation may provide personal safety but leaves your house vulnerable. Increased losses are almost inevitable.
- Research shows that more than twice as many unattended houses are destroyed.
- Historically, most deaths occur while evacuating through embers, flames or smoke.
- The close second highest is when people are outside and not protectively clothed.
- The third highest is when people shelter inside too far from an exit.

Definitely food for thought.

HUFF extends to Medlow Bath

This Sunday the first street meetings will be held in Medlow Bath to introduce HUFF into that village. Watch this space.

Exciting News

BANC has received a small grant to keep HUFF puffing along. As well as extending the project to Medlow Bath, I will be visiting Seniors Groups and schools in our area to enable people to be more prepared for emergencies.

Regards, Mina Howard 0419 629 407