



## HUFF STUFF

### Newsletter

### Issue 25

March 2018

Greetings everyone,

Well who would have thought that such severe weather conditions would be occurring this late in March? The horrific fires that have affected Tathra and Victoria are an example of how we can never be complacent.

In the last edition of our newsletter I talked about being vigilant during bushfire weather and how embers are the main cause of houses burning down. One of our Blackheath locals has a relative living in Tathra.

The relative was lucky to have her house survive the fire. However, she relates how on the morning of the day when the fire struck the hot and windy weather conditions were an immediate worry. Keeping a watch throughout the day she noticed smoke and checked on *Fires Near Me* to find that a fire had broken out in the vicinity. To verify this she and her partner drove to a vantage point in Tathra and saw that the fire was indeed going and heading their way. On returning to the house they discovered that the power had gone and they weren't able to get their second car out of the garage. Rushing next door they alerted the 92 year-old wheel-chair bound neighbor. As there was no space for his wheelchair he had to be squeezed into the front of their ute. Unfortunately, the neighbour's medications were behind. This provided another problem as the meds are difficult to replace and he was forced to remain in hospital

until the prescription could be arranged. Luckily they made it to safety as did all the residents of Tathra.

Lessons can be learned from this one story.

1. The resident was alert to the weather.

*'Look out the window, smell the air, notice the wind.'*

2. They consulted the *Fires Near Me* app.

3. They knew their neighbor was particularly vulnerable and went to his assistance.

Basically this person was aware and vigilant so there was a good outcome. And remember...

**The shower of embers can arrive half an hour before the fire front and keep falling for four hours after the main fire has passed.**

*Source: Essential Bushfire Safety Tips by Joan Webster OAM*



*Be vigilant.*

**HUFF is growing.** We have two new facilitators in Medlow Bath and another one in Mount Victoria. Welcome Peter, Michael and Melita.

### **Justices of the Peace**

One of our HUFF Coordinators Robyn Hobson is a Justice of the Peace. Her number is 4787 8035.

We also have Chris Morgan: 47877441

**I found this on the RFS website and thought it was a promising development even though it's going to take five years. The good thing about this commitment is that the government is prepared to give more serious thought to strategies that will help us all become more prepared and confident about living in a bushfire-prone area.**

#### **“\$4 million for new bushfire research hub**

Published Date: 28 Feb 2018

#### **Summary**

The NSW Government has provided \$4 million and launched a new *Bushfire Risk Management Research Hub*, Minister for the Environment Gabrielle Upton and Minister for Emergency Services Troy Grant announced today.

The Hub is part of a five-year research partnership between the University of Wollongong (UoW) and the Office of Environment and Heritage (OEH).

“The *Bushfire Risk Management Research Hub* will provide the NSW-centred scientific research we need to ensure the safety of our communities, property and the environment,” Ms Upton said.

“The Hub will host a team of world-class experts who will work with the communities most vulnerable to bushfires.” Minister for Emergency Services Troy Grant welcomed the partnership and the Hub’s specialised focus on NSW bushfires.

“Each year bushfires pose significant risks to lives and property across our state. This Hub brings together academic expertise and practical knowledge from our firefighters to develop ways we can mitigate bushfires in the future,” Mr Grant said.

“What works for one area may not work for another, so it’s great that this research will look at local solutions across the state,” Mr Grant said.

Led by Professor Ross Bradstock, experts from the UoW, Western Sydney University, the University of NSW and the University of Tasmania will work together with OEH, the NSW Rural Fire Service and NSW Environment Protection Authority to deliver research to reduce bushfire risk to urban, rural and indigenous communities.

Some of the key research focuses are:

- Impacts and management of hazard reduction burns;
- Drivers of bushfire frequency and severity;
- Impacts on air quality; and
- Impacts on the environment and endangered plants and animals.

The Hub will be located in the Centre for Environmental Risk Management of Bushfires at UoW.”

### **Do you have a wood heater?**

As the cool weather sets in it may be time for you to get your flue cleaned and checked to prevent risk of fire. Make sure your flue is properly lined. A couple who had a new fire installed recently has found that the lining stopped well short of the full length of the flue. This could have caused serious consequences if it had not been discovered in time by a chimney sweep.

Have a relaxing Easter and enjoy the autumn colours as, no doubt, so will many tourists.

Regards, Mina Howard