



HUFF STUFF

Newsletter

Issue 29

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Greetings everyone,

I hope you have all been surviving the chilly weather while at the same time enjoying the beautiful clear days. If you are brave enough to venture outside at night you will have noticed the amazing sky where Mars, Jupiter and Saturn are very visible and aligned. (*The only reason I know this is that my brother rang me from Sydney and told me to go outside and have a look – I'm sure he doesn't realise it's at least 8 degrees colder!*)

Having such cold weather encourages people to light fires to keep warm. One of our facilitators became concerned when some visitors decided to light a fire in the backyard of their holiday rental. This in itself may not seem too dangerous except that it was yesterday – a very windy day. The weather was severe enough for all Fire Permits to be cancelled for 24 hours, even though it is the middle of winter.

This demonstrates that there are many people out there who are totally unaware of fire versus weather conditions, something that most of us living in the mountains take for granted.

The visitors were asked to put out the fire by two neighbours but only complied when a third neighbor asked them to do so. Those neighbours, including the HUFF Facilitator, did the sensible thing by asking politely. However if you come across this situation and are concerned it is okay to

call 000 and have it investigated.

Having said that, the RFS brigade often gets calls to go out and investigate a smoke sighting. Most of these are reported from the escarpment and are a long way off in the valleys. Remembering that many large property owners have approval to pile burn during the off season it is worth observing for a while to see if the smoke is in fact not spreading or increasing. However, if in doubt call 000.

Many people are unsure of the rules for burning off so I have attached the document for your reference, straight from the RFS website where you can find lots of useful information.

Brigades at Work



Blackheath/Mount Victoria RFS Brigade members turned up at Blackheath Oval last Saturday to assist the football club put up screens for their semi-final

match. They were there again to pull it all down after the match, which the Blackheath Blackcats won! This means they will return on the 28th July to put the screens up again for the Grand Final. Come up and cheer on your local footy team!

Meanwhile, training continues during the winter months. Members have been learning how to identify fuel loadings, give weather reports, improving their driving skills and more. And our special non-operational group turns up every Friday to clean up and keep everything in order which is a great help to the brigade.

A very important note for pet owners.

I am including a letter from Cheryl Travers who is looking for stories to assist her with her studies. Cheryl has offered to give us a talk when her work is finalized, probably early next year. It would be great if you could help or pass this on to anyone you know who may have something to contribute.

Hello HUFF facilitators

Are you a pet owner? Did you and your pet(s) experience the October 2013 Blue Mountains bushfires? Or do you know someone who did experience this disaster with their pets?

My name is Cheryl Travers and I would like to invite you to take part in an important study being conducted as part of my PhD with Research for Social Change (RFSC), a new centre at the University of Wollongong. The study aims to better understand the relationship and interactions between emergency services (e.g. our firies, SES and evacuation centre staff) and pet owners in a disaster. It also explores who is considered responsible for pets in disasters, and in what ways.

I am asking pet owners who experienced the October 2013 fires with their pets to take part in my study. This involves having an informal talk with me about your experiences either in-person or by telephone

(your choice). The study is under the supervision of Dr Chris Degeling, a Senior Fellow and Veterinarian with RFSC, and Dr Mel Taylor is a Co-Investigator.

We know that people cope better in natural disasters when pets are protected alongside their human families. Its early days for research into the human-animal bond and the implications for emergency management in Australia. My study will add to a growing knowledge base which we consider essential for preparedness and response, and to the promotion of health and wellbeing, for both people and their pets, post-disaster.

I hope you can help me with this study. To find out more please ring my mobile 0400 858 141 or contact me by email cat983@uowmail.edu.au. I can send you some information about the study and answer any questions to help you decide whether you will take part. Also, please feel free to pass on the information to others you think may be interested.

Many thanks for your help

Cheryl



Regards, Mina

