



## HUFF STUFF

### Newsletter

### Issue 31

September/October

2018

Greetings everyone,

It's so good to see the rain and low temperatures and I hope this weather stays around for a little while longer. Having just returned from walking in Portugal and Spain, where temperatures were over 30 degrees Celsius every day, I am really appreciating a slower start to Spring and Summer as I'm sure you are. Let us hope that the rain continues long enough to make a difference for our poor farmers.

On the 17<sup>th</sup> October it will be five years since the devastating bush fires occurred in Springwood and Mount Victoria. Back in 2013 September temperatures were the warmest on record for NSW. This year the lack of rain has prompted an early start to the bushfire season - September rather than October. As the anniversary approaches this extract from Wikipedia is a reminder of what happened in Mount Victoria on the 17<sup>th</sup> October. The site also contains information on the many fires that were burning around the state during that time.

#### ***Mount Victoria***

*On 17 October a fire burning near the [Mount York Road](#), north northwest of the village of [Mount Victoria](#), on the western edge of the Blue Mountains plateau, had burned only a few hectares by 13:56. Yet within minutes the fire had broken containment lines and by 15:45 an emergency*

*warning was issued as the fire burned towards Mount Victoria and destroyed seven houses, crossed the Darling Causeway to the east, and was burning into the Grose Valley.*

*The fire crossed to the west of Mount York Road and threatened properties in the Kanimbla Valley. Back burning efforts by the RFS overnight on 21–22 October introduced 'The Plug', which forced the deliberate merger of the Mount Victoria fire with the fires that originated near Lithgow. 'The Plug' was the brain child of a long term resident, former National Parks Officer, serving Rural Fire Service Officer and general font of fire-fighting knowledge in the Blue Mountains, Peter Verhoeven. Authorities were concerned that weather conditions forecast for 23 October could drive the now merged fire eastwards, with little chance of stopping it, resulting in potentially disastrous impacts on many towns in the Blue Mountains. Consequently, the NSW Government ordered the closure of every school and child care centre on 23 October, and urged residents who did not need to be in the mountains to leave early that day. Fortunately the weather was not quite as bad as forecast and fire fighters were able to slow its progress.*

*The fire spread over 9,000 hectares (22,000 acres) before being declared officially out by 13*

November, with its cause attributed to strong winds with resultant powerline damage.

Source:

[https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/2013\\_New\\_South\\_Wales\\_bushfires](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/2013_New_South_Wales_bushfires)

## HOW FIREPROOF IS YOUR FIREPLAN?

The new-look **MYFIREPLAN.COM.AU** is an excellent way to help you decide the best plan for you and your family. Following is an example of the kind of information it has to assist you if you are unsure on what you should do.

### Outside

- Turn off gas mains and/or bottle
- Move flammable items away from the house
- Block drainpipes with socks full of sand and fill gutters with water
- Do not get on the roof to hose it down

### Inside

- Close doors, windows and vents
- Fill baths, sinks, buckets and bins with water
- Soak towels and rugs and lay them across external doorways
- Move furniture away from windows

### Before You Leave

- Pack the items you wish to take with you, as identified in your **Bush Fire Survival Plan**
- Secure your home by locking all doors and windows
- If you live on a rural property, ensure you leave access gates unlocked to aid firefighters who may be required to access your property while you are not there
- Confirm the location you are heading is still safe and away from the fire

- Confirm your planned route is clear
- Check **Live Traffic NSW** or your local Council website for road closures
- Contact a relative or friend and tell them you are leaving and for where
- Be sure to contact them again once you have arrived safely

If it is too dangerous to leave, or you receive an Emergency Alert advising you to 'Seek shelter as the fire approaches', **do not** attempt to leave. Shelter in a room on the opposite side of your house from the approaching fire and ensure you have clear access to an exit.

Each time you click on a red underlined phrase you will be directed to a site with more information. Please have a look at it and share it with your friends.

## Get Ready Weekend

Our local RFS brigade, Blackheath/Mount Victoria visited Blackheath Public School, Mountains Christian College and Mount Victoria Public School in the two days leading up to Get Ready weekend. The brigade then opened to our community on Saturday at Mount Victoria RFS station and Sunday at Blackheath RFS station.

This year the brigade focused on planning for your pets, demonstrated ways of making your property fire-safe and were able to allow visitors to practice putting out a fire with an extinguisher using a new piece of equipment that simulates various fire scenarios. This very expensive equipment was recently purchased by Blue Mountains District Office.

At least twenty people requested a property assessment so our volunteers will be very busy during the weeks ahead.



A Kookaburra Kindy kid gets to water the school playground.



Snr Deputy Larry Howard demonstrates the simulator.



This model was useful in starting a conversation about how you can reduce the impact of fire on your property.



Deputy Brian Jewell had the children engrossed.