



HUFF STUFF Newsletter Issue 39 September 2019

Greetings everyone,

The fire season has been brought forward by one month this year due to the drought conditions. You would be no doubt aware of the multitude of fires burning in NSW and Queensland. Blackheath brigades have been volunteering up north with a crew of six setting out yesterday for Tenterfield.

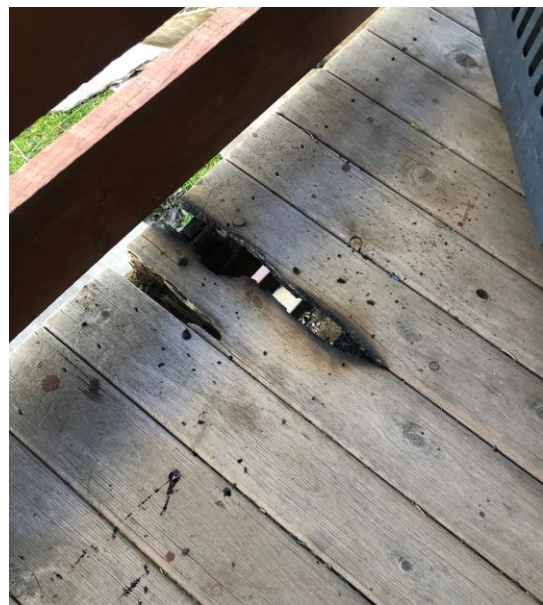
You also would have been aware of the fire at Lidsdale, near Lithgow, that took hold on Friday of last week, a Total Fire Ban day. I spoke to someone whose home was threatened and they have an amazing, but not untypical story to tell.

When the fire broke out this particular family were in a very vulnerable situation. At the residence there was the daughter with her infant daughter, there were the elderly and mobility-restricted parents, a friend and the husband and wife, both of whom would have normally been at work.

The daughter was able to leave and the friend evacuated the elderly parents but by then it was too late for the owners of the property to leave and spot fires were starting all over their yard. They spent an exhausting time putting out those fires and probably saving their house. But the story doesn't stop there. As they sat on the back deck to take a five minute breather and drink some water, the husband noticed flames and realised that the

A fire had ignited under the deck. They were able to extinguish the flame, grateful in the knowledge that they'd chosen to sit out the back and not the front!

This account of one family's experience is a lesson for all of us on how houses can be damaged or destroyed by ember attack and not direct flames. It also shows that if you can stay and defend your home there's a better chance of it surviving a bush fire.



This photo shows the hole in the deck caused from embers igniting the space under the deck.



Photos above and below show some of the spot fires that the owners were able to extinguish.



The ferocity of the fire and threat to homes was not to be underestimated.

CYBER_Shed APP_FIX_IT

Simon is offering free help with your smartphones and tablets each Wednesday at BANC from 9.30 -12.30. Just drop in, no need to book. Please pass the word around.

Blackheath Public School students have been learning about fire safety.

So far the Blackheath/Mount Victoria RFS Community Engagement Team have given four talks to classes at school. Hopefully, the students will take what they learn with them and engage their families in conversations about being prepared this season. By the end of next week we will have visited every class from Kindergarten to year 5/6. It is amazing what some children know already and as it's our third year of spreading the word we hope that our young people will emerge into adulthood better prepared for emergencies.

And speaking of young people, get them to try the TRIPLE 000 Kids Challenge. This fantastic program will teach them so much about emergencies in a fun and engaging way.

<http://kids.triplezero.gov.au>

Get Ready Weekend

The *Get Ready Weekend* event at Blackheath Public School is on Sunday the 22nd September from 10.00am to 2.00 pm. BANC will be partnering with us by having a kite making workshop. Come along and join in the fun.

Regards, Mina