

Malua Bay Rural Fire Brigade

Bushfire Season Newsletter

September 2014

Serving Our Community



CONTACT US

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Hazard Reduction Planning



Dangerous Fire Season

Each year immediately before the fire season the Malua Bay Rural Fire Brigade sends out a newsletter to its residents and property owners. It is a time to tell you a little about us and especially to offer suggestions about preparing for the coming fire season.

Weather predictions for the coming summer will see a strengthening of the El-Niño effects and we can expect a longer, hotter and drier summer. While all planned local hazard reductions have been completed the added abundance of growth over recent years see us with extra fuel loads and thus a greater risk of a large fire locally. **The coming bushfire season is expected to be a dangerous one.**

The short term potential bushfire effects on our area can be projected by looking at the fire activity in northern NSW. Their season is usually 6 to 8 weeks ahead of ours and has already started, 2 months ahead of expected.

It is necessary that everybody is well aware of what they are going to do should a fire come. Things like when to stay and when to leave along with where you are going if you leave, should be known well in advance by loved ones. **Saves panic later!**

Various articles in this newsletter and on our website will help you in preparing well before the fire emergency arrives. In keeping with this years RFS theme the features are dedicated to "*know your risk*". You are invited to join us at our open day, talk to our dedicated team and share some of their experiences in preparing for fire and what to do when confronted by a fire threat.

Now is the time to start preparing your property and your Bush Fire Survival Plan.

Malua Bay Rural Fire Brigade Open Day Saturday 13 September 2014

10am – 3pm

Malua Bay Reserve (next to the Surf Club)

As a resident or owner of land in the brigade area you will be at risk from bushfire, particularly in the rural areas. The risk will be greatest from a fire quickly coming from the west.

You need to consider many questions particularly: Are you sure of your risk? Do you have a Bushfire Survival Plan? What can you do to reduce your risk? Will you leave early or stay and defend? When will you decide? Is your escape route feasible? Do you have the fitness, skills and equipment to stay? What can you do now, in preparation, to minimize the risk? What will the new 10/50 rule allow you to do and not do? The answers to these questions will help you **formulate your Bushfire Survival Plan.**

Come to the open day and talk with local brigade members, we will have large scale maps and other information sources available to assist those discussions. Our trucks will also be available for the kids (young and old) to enjoy!

Mark this date on your calendar now!

How Buildings Ignite in Wildfire



Prepare. Act. Survive.

PREPARE.

It's your responsibility to prepare yourself, your family and your home for the threat of bush fire.

Prepare a Bush Fire Survival Plan

Prepare Yourself

Prepare Your Property

ACT.

You need to act decisively in accordance with your Bush Fire Survival Plan when bush fires threaten.

Keep Informed

Follow your Bush Fire Survival Plan

SURVIVE.

Your survival depends on your preparations and the decisions you make.

People are more important than houses

Have a contingency plan

The CSIRO Division of Building Research carried out detailed research in Victoria following the Ash Wednesday fires of 1983 to determine why and how buildings ignite.

The research showed that there were three common causes of ignition in order of effect:

- 1 Embers lodging on combustible material
- 2 Radiation from the fire
- 3 Direct flame contact

Embers

Most houses are ignited by embers. Wind-borne embers attack houses before, and many hours after the fire front passes through. Fire fronts only affect houses for several minutes.

Embers gain entry to houses through broken windows or gaps in and around walls or cladding, under roofing next to guttering and ignite contents. Embers also lodge on and ignite horizontal timber decks, steps and window sills. They can be blown up against and ignite timber used for supports, underfloor battens, posts and steps.

Radiation

Radiant heat can crack windows, allowing embers to enter. Radiation also heats the buildings and contents increasing the risk of ignition by embers or flame.

Flame contact

The greatest risk is that of vegetation growing against the house being ignited. There is no evidence of houses spontaneously exploding due to heat from the fire front. Buildings are lost because small fires start inside or next to them. How close are trees and shrubs to your house?

Are you in a 10/50 Vegetation Clearing Entitlement Area? Visit www.rfs.nsw.gov.au

Simple Things to do to Prepare Your Property

Some of the things you should do around your property and will also help you to *understand your risk* include

- Cut back any overhanging trees or shrubs and dispose of cuttings appropriately
- Check the condition of your roof and replace any damaged or missing tiles
- Non-combustible fences are the most effective at withstanding the intense heat generated by bush fires.
- Clean leaves from the roof, gutters and downpipes and fit quality metal leaf guards.
- Plant trees that are less likely to ignite due to their low oil content.
- If you have a water tank, dam or swimming pool, consider installing a Static Water Supply (SWS) sign.
- Enclose underfloor areas
- Store wood piles well away from the house and keep covered.
- Keep garden mulch away from the house and keep grass cut short.
- Make sure the pressure relief valve on LPG cylinders face outwards (so flames are not directed towards the house).
- Ensure you have heat resistant hoses long enough to reach every part of your home.
- Remove and store any flammable items away from the house.
- Install metal flywire or solid screens to the outside windows and doors.
- Have a non-combustible door mat.
- Check the condition of external walls, cladding and seal any gaps.
- Note where leaves accumulate after wind storms –that is where embers will accumulate.

Serving Our Community

The **Malua Bay Rural Fire Brigade** is an “urban interface” brigade and responds to bushfires, house fires, motor vehicle accidents and supports other agencies as needed. In the past 12 months the Brigade, as part of its standby duties, has attended a total of 22 incidents.

Fire (Bush / Grass / Structural)	8
Motor Vehicle Accidents	2
Hazardous Conditions	0
Service Support Calls	2
False Alarm Good Intent	10
TOTAL	22

Hazard Reduction – “Protecting Our Community”

Who is Responsible for Hazard Reduction?

“If it's your property, it's your fuel and you are legally responsible for reducing hazards.”

Under the *Rural Fires Act, 1997*, land managers and owners are responsible for carrying out hazard reduction to protect existing dwellings, major buildings or other assets susceptible to fire. Effective hazard reduction is one way to reduce the risk of damage to homes and structures by bushfire.

HELP US TO HELP YOU! PREPARE YOUR PROPERTY!

Eurobodalla Control Centre Phone: 4474 2855 Email: farsouthcoast.team@rfs.nsw.gov.au

Rules on Lighting Fires in the Open

When carrying out hazard reductions you need to be aware that the lighting of fires in the open in the Malua Bay Brigade Area are covered by two separate pieces of Legislation. Most commonly people would be well aware of not lighting fires on a day of total fire ban and the need to get a fire permit during the statutory Bush Fire Danger Period which runs from 1 October to 31 March, (this declaration period may be changed depending on seasonal conditions). These rules are set out in Rural Fires Act.

However in the Eurobodalla Shire Area there are added over riding restrictions related to being able to burn any material in the open at any time. ***This restriction applies whether it is a Fire Danger Period or not.***

In order to protect public health and amenity in residential and rural residential areas

- The burning of all waste including vegetation on all land zoned for urban purposes under the *Eurobodalla Local Environmental Plan 2012* is prohibited.
- Any person residing in an area to which a domestic waste management service is available is prohibited from burning domestic waste on those premises.
- People residing on land currently zoned for rural purposes under the *Eurobodalla Local Environmental Plan 2012* or *Eurobodalla Rural Local Environment Plan 1997* may burn dead and dry vegetation on premises within those zones, subject to a set of Council conditions—those conditions are
 - *Burning must take place by such practicable means as are necessary to prevent or minimise air pollution.*
 - *Permission from the owner of the property must be obtained prior to burning.*
 - *Vegetation must only be burnt on the premises on which it grew.*
 - *Every attempt must be made to recycle or reuse vegetation prior to burning. Recycling techniques include but are not limited to mulching, composting, milling, and use as fuel for heating purposes. Only the residue from recycling and reuse can be burnt.*
 - *Burning must only take place during dry weather conditions, taking into account the potential for smoke impacting on any person due to wind direction and other climatic conditions.*
 - *Burning must not take place where other persons are likely to be unduly impacted.*
 - *Burning must not take place less than 200 metres from land zoned for urban purposes under the Eurobodalla Local Environmental Plan 2012.*
 - *Burning must not take place as the result of an activity requiring development consent, unless prior consent has been obtained.*
 - *Subject to any provisions of the Eurobodalla Local Environmental Plan 2012.*

Where these conditions cannot be met burning must not take place and an individual approval must be sought from council.

Check List Before Burning Off

Your cooperation and consideration of others as well as following the regulations will dramatically reduce the number of unnecessary Brigade call outs.

Before lighting that fire ask yourself the following:

Do I need a Hazard Reduction Certificate?

Do I need a fire permit?

Do I need to comply with the Eurobodalla Shire Council’s Clean Air Policy?

Are the weather conditions favourable?

Do I have sufficient equipment and personnel to control the burn?

AND Have I ...

Given 24hrs notice to the Brigade Captain?

Given 24hrs notice to the Fire Control Centre?

Given 24hrs notice to my neighbours?

Check first with the Brigade Captain Marty Green if you are unsure.

Failure to comply with the above could result in heavy fines

Meeting Nights

1st Tuesday of each month 6:00pm - 7:30pm

Training Nights

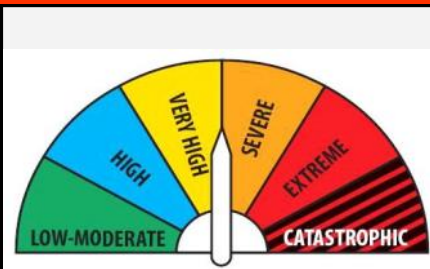
2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month 6:00pm - 7:30pm

Location

Reservoir Rd, Malua Bay (off George Bass Drive)



FIRE DANGER RATING



Fire Danger Rating (FDR) is an assessment of the potential fire behaviour, the difficulty of suppressing a fire, and the potential impact on the community should a bush fire occur on a given day.

The FDR is determined by the Fire Danger Index (FDI). The FDI is a combination of air temperature, relative humidity, wind speed and drought factors.

An FDI of 1 (Low-Moderate) means that fire will not burn, or will burn so slowly that it will be easily controlled, whereas an FDI in excess of 100 (Catastrophic) means that fire will burn so fast and so hot that it will be uncontrollable.

Busy Season Completed

For NSW the last two fire seasons have been the worst on record, the January 2013 fires around the Warrumbungle National Park and then the November fires in the Blue Mountains saw unprecedented property losses. Also other fires across the State and in Victoria stretched RFS resources. Again, our brigade area was relatively unaffected. We were able to provide crews to support control efforts not only in nearby brigade areas of the Eurobodalla Shire but also in the mountains behind Ulladulla, the Tumut region and at Cann River in Victoria. With our larger brigade strength this was all done without reducing our local brigade area readiness and capability to respond.

Reporting Bush Fire Hazards

If you believe there is a bush fire hazard near your property, you can make a formal complaint by contacting the Eurobodalla Fire Control Centre in person, via email, mail, fax or phone;

NSW Rural Fire Service - Eurobodalla
30 Campbell Street Moruya NSW 2537

PHONE: 4474 2855

Email: farsouthcoast.team@rfs.nsw.gov.au

TRAINING

Over the last 12 months Malua Bay Brigade members have not only been busy with fires and incidents but also training. The training completed was Bush Fire Fighter, Village Fire Fighter and Chainsaw Courses along with Asbestos Incident Training, Crew Leader courses and Air Operations. These have enhanced their skills in protecting the community in which they live.



Are you interested in becoming a Rural Fire Service Volunteer?

Contact Malua Bay Rural Fire Brigade Secretary Helen Riedl

Phone: 4471 2625

Email: mbrfb@bigpond.com

or

You can get information at www.rfs.nsw.gov.au

Check Out the Malua Bay Brigade Website

www.maluabay.rfsa.org.au