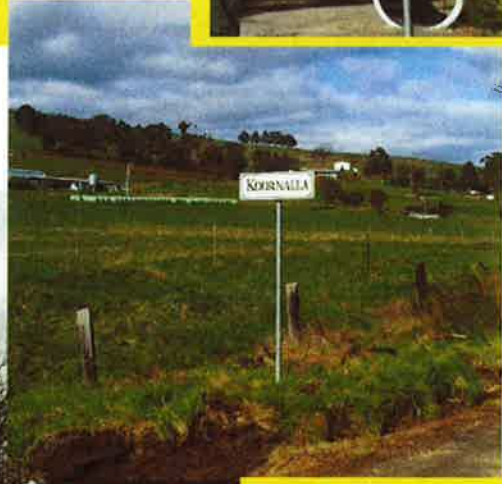
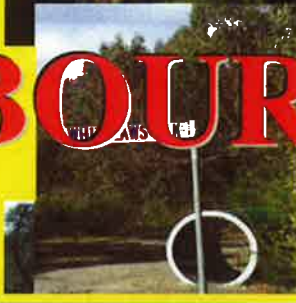


ARE YOU AND YOUR NEIGHBOURS



READY FOR

SUMMER?



Serving the CATS Communities of
Callignee, Callignee North, Callignee South, Koornalla, LeRoy, Loy Yang Park, Traralgon South

PREPARING FOR A FIRE EMERGENCY IN THE CATS AREA

In this district there is a **real and continuing** risk from bush fire. History, and evidence about our changing climate, tells us that there will be more major bush fires so you are wise to prepare for your safety. Also, our district is not like a city or township where emergency services are usually expected to give leadership during the event. We have to look out for ourselves.

You are responsible for your household's safety.

Preparing for Fire Emergencies



Preparation for bush fires is a year round activity, and not just something that is done when the fire season approaches. The chances of survival are improved by good household planning.

As the fire season approaches, the authorities check their equipment, replenish water supplies, undertake training exercises, and organise public briefings.

Residents have a similar responsibility to think ahead. For example, protection of buildings will rely on building design and materials, minimising the impact of embers, and clearance of combustible materials around buildings.

It is vital to review household fire plans at least on an annual basis.



Strong community connections are also important. This is because your own household plan may interact with those of other people who may fail to accommodate your expectations. Working with your neighbours will help you to prepare by discussing ideas, sharing resources and developing mutual support arrangements. Because we live in a comparatively remote area, our neighbours are our first line of support.

We shouldn't rely on emergency services but we should be mindful of our neighbours to whom we may need to give support.



Insurance

Ensure that you have sufficient insurance to cover the replacement value of your property.

Continuity of Personal Records

Loss of personal records may be a serious issue after a fire. Arrange to keep copies at a safe remote location.

Personal Safety

Personal safety clothing on the following list should be kept at one agreed point in your house. There should be sufficient **to provide for every occupant's personal safety in an emergency.** In the event of a bush fire radiated heat (i.e. heat from flames) can be minimised by wearing this clothing:

- Long-sleeved shirt and pants (natural fibre for fire emergency)
- Sturdy boots and woollen socks
- Tough leather garden gloves
- Strong brimmed hat to protect your head
- Goggles to protect eyes
- Face mask or, at the very least, towel to cover mouth and nose
- Hearing protection

Do not expose your body to radiated heat by wearing only T shirts, shorts and thongs. Cover up in fire resistant natural fibres.



Mr Lloyd Venables valiantly decided to stay to defend his Airey's Inlet home on Ash Wednesday. But valour is not enough. Protective clothing and indoor shelter from the peak of a flame front is needed. Minutes after this picture was taken, Mr Venables was dead. A Pine forest nearby ignited from a spot fire with a fierce rush of radiant heat.

(Courtesy Geelong Advertiser)

Relocation Kit

Assemble a Relocation Kit, consisting of items for personal use at a remote location.

Livestock

If you have livestock, plan how you will secure their safety.



Community Fire Guard



CFA acknowledges the complexities of bushfire management. In addition to providing annual community briefings, the CFA also assists residents in the establishment and training of Community Fireguard Groups ("CFGs"). CFGs provide an opportunity to work with your neighbours in developing bushfire survival strategies that suit their level of risk, lifestyle, environment, and values.

To join an existing Community Fireguard Group, or start a new Group, contact our local CFA District 10 Community Education Co-ordinators on 5149 1000.

Stay or Go



In preparing your Household Bushfire Safety Plan there are a number of things we have learned from previous experience.

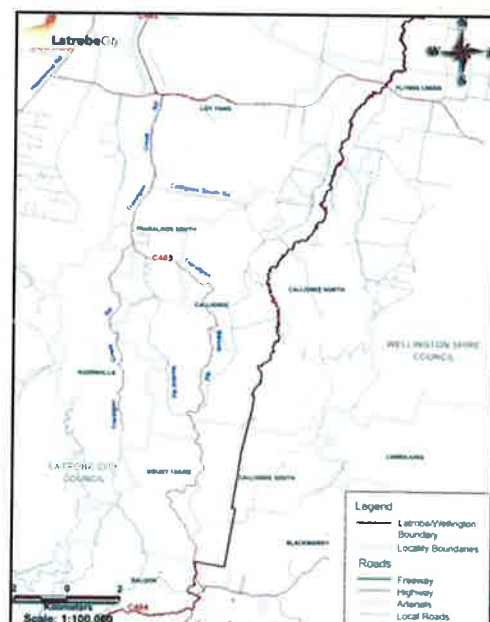
- Complacency is the real enemy
- People usually overrate the effectiveness of their preparations
- In a major fire, the emergency services may be unable to provide assistance to individuals. The CFA will not send crews into harms way and are unlikely to have enough people to put out a large fire.
- Despite all the information on 'Stay or Go' many people will still 'wait and see' and leave their decisions to the last minute.

Leaving your decision on whether to stay or go until the last minute may be a fatal course of action.

- Even if your main intention is to leave well before any incident, it is wise to prepare your household and property as though you plan to stay. This is because we live in a fire prone area and a local fire can flare up without notice, leaving no opportunity to escape.
- In all bush fires, being away from the fire area is the safest option. Staying and defending property should only be undertaken by well prepared and trained households.
- If you plan to stay and defend your property, you must be prepared to rely on your own resources. You will be in danger, it will be psychologically and physically demanding.
- A big bushfire is horrific. It will be pitch dark from the smoke, then a raging inferno, it will be hard to breathe, very hot, and the noise can be terrifying.

- You should not risk the lives of the infirm, elderly, vulnerable or young children. However, all members of the family should be included in your fire training, even if it is in your fire plan to send them away in an emergency. They may be unable to leave if the fire is unexpected.
- **On a Total Fire Ban Day keep a clear head and do not consume alcohol**
- Decide on your trigger to act. Also consider that you may be caught with little notice and be on your own anyway.
- There is likely to be no power
- There is likely to be no telephone
- Reticulated water systems are likely to fail
- Given our local road system, **travelling on roads during a fire is extremely dangerous.**

To obtain the help and advice of the CFA on these and related matters, you should call the Victorian Bushfire Information Line – 1800 240 657 or go to the CFA Web Site – cfa.vic.gov.au.



Planning To Leave Your Property

If you plan to leave your property it is safest to leave early in the day that a fire may occur. Make sure your neighbours know that you have left the district and how you may be contacted.



Deciding When to Go

If it's part of your plan to leave, you must identify the thing that will trigger your departure. When you see flames or smoke nearby it is too late, you then have to defend. The CFA advises to leave early on days when the Fire Danger Rating is Severe, Extreme or Code Red.

Even if it is your plan to leave, you are still responsible for minimising the risk of fire on your property. Your neighbours' plan may be to stay and defend. Their ability to succeed may depend on minimising the risk from your property.

Where will I go?

First Choice

Well before the Fire Season you should identify a place where you will go in the event that you decide to evacuate. In deciding where to go, you should plan for the possibility that you may be there for at least several days.

Fall Back

Often circumstances change at short notice. For this reason, whatever your first choice, you should also identify a fall-back in case your preferred option is not available.

Essential Steps Before the Fire Season

Whether you've got a farm, a plantation or a bushblock - this checklist will help you prepare for the fire season.

1. Planning

Have a routine in place for fire risk days. Make sure everyone is aware of it.

Know your trigger to leave early on fire risk days

2. Fuel loads and stock

Reduce fuel loads and create strategic fuel breaks.

Create a heavily grazed area where stock can be moved during a bushfire.

3. Permits and laws

Make a list of legal restrictions (Fire Danger Period and Total Fire Ban) for your property. Display it so everyone can refer to it easily.

Check with your council if local laws are in place for lighting fires, burning off or using incinerators.

4. Vehicles, equipment and hay

Double check that spark arrestors on machinery are working and efficient. Ensure chainsaws are free from faults.

Have water fire extinguishers or knapsack spray (minimum 9 litres) to be carried by any person using farm equipment or machinery.

Have a safety strategy in place for storing and monitoring hay

For more details please refer to the Community Emergency Handbook. If you need another copy please call Stuart Strachan on 03 5195 5298

If you have private firefighting equipment, have a 'refresher' session with family and employees.

Make sure that there are no gaps between the cladding and the ground or slab of your sheds to prevent embers getting inside.

5. Access for firefighters

Make sure your property name or number is clearly visible

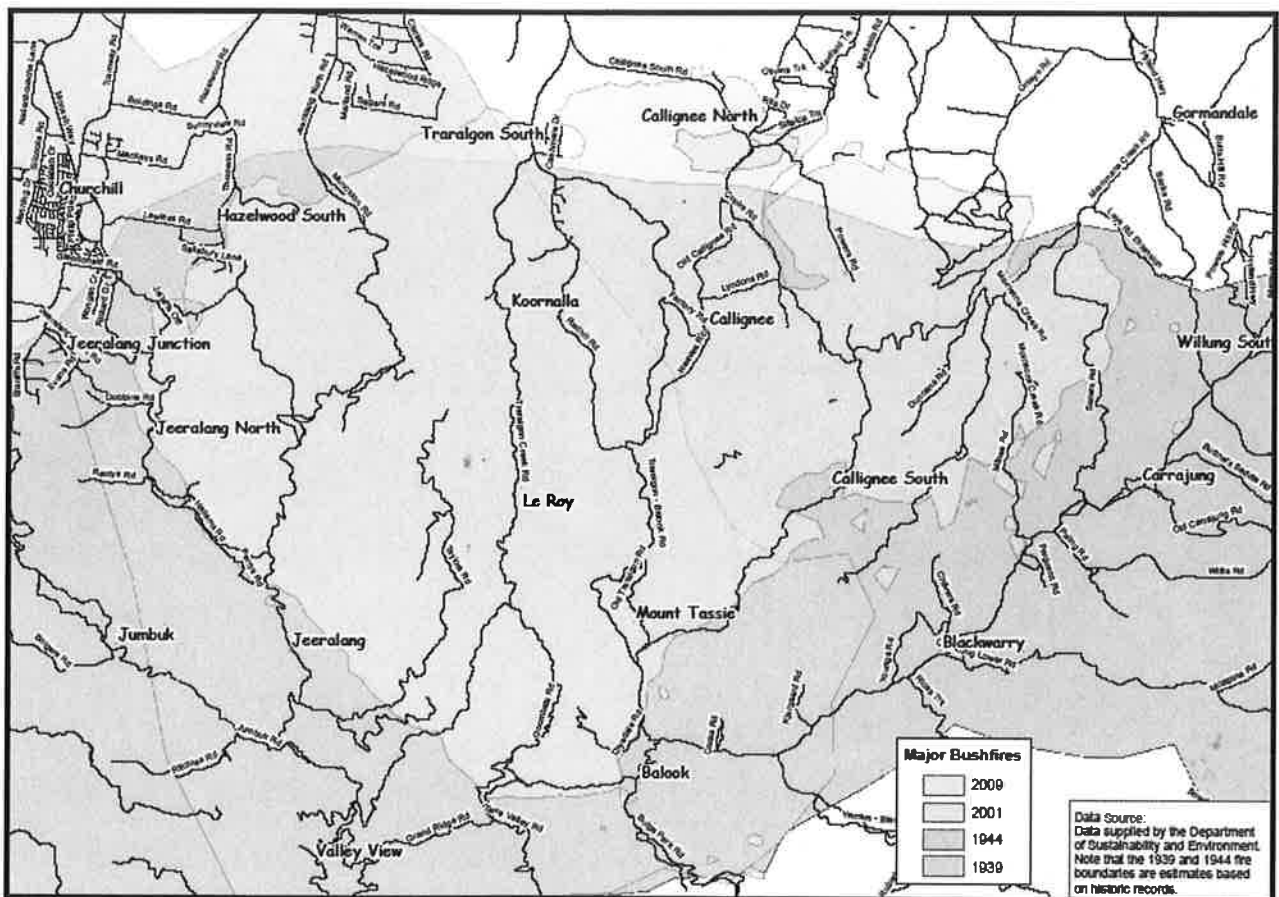
Check tracks around your property for fire truck access.

Make sure water supplies are clearly marked.

If you plan to stay and defend during a bushfire, establish a water supply of at least 10,000 litres (independent of the mains supply).

6. Recovery

Have contact details for your local council as a first port of call for recovery assistance after a fire.



Published by the CATS Emergency Committee. For more information about fire protection please contact the Fire Captain at Traralgon South on 03 5195 5044 or Callignee on 0419 132 016

Comments within this document are made without prejudice with the objective of helping residents to be better informed in protecting themselves. In an emergency, you should follow the advice provided by the appropriate emergency service. It is your responsibility to ensure that any advice is appropriate to your situation.