

AUSTRALIAN BUSHFIRES

As you would have all seen on the news in recent months, Australia has suffered a terrible season for bushfires with the ongoing fires having already burned an estimate of over 18,000,000 hectares of land, destroyed over 2,500 buildings and affected over 1 billion animals (as of 21st January 2020), there has also been tragic loss of human lives. It has been described as the most destructive bushfire season since the 2008-2009 Australian Bushfires.

We wanted to take a look into what bushfires are to send a massive thank you to those who have dedicated themselves to fighting these fires and supporting the communities who have been affected.



SO, WHAT IS A BUSHFIRE EXACTLY?

A bushfire can be defined as an uncontrollable fire. They cause major damage to property and human life. Vegetation works as a fuel for these fires. They occur on every continent except Antarctica.

BUSHFIRES IN AUSTRALIA

Bushfires and grassfires are common throughout Australia due to our hot, dry climate.

Grassfires are fast moving, passing in five to ten seconds and smouldering for minutes. They have a low to medium intensity and primarily damage crops, livestock and farming infrastructure, such as fences.

Bushfires are generally slower moving, but have a higher heat output. This means they pass in two to five minutes, but they can smoulder for days. Fire in the crown of the tree canopy can move rapidly.



HOW DO BUSHFIRES START?

Fires need three elements to start; Heat or a source of ignition, this can come from a natural source such as a lightning strike or from man-made sources, both intentional and accidental. Fuel, in the case of a bushfire this is usually dried out plant matter. Finally, you need Oxygen, coming from the atmosphere.



To extinguish a bushfire, it is necessary to remove one of these elements. The most common methods of doing this are to use water or a fire retardant which essentially absorb the energy of the fire and reduces the heat, or to remove the fuel by strategically 'back-burning', and preventing the fire from spreading.

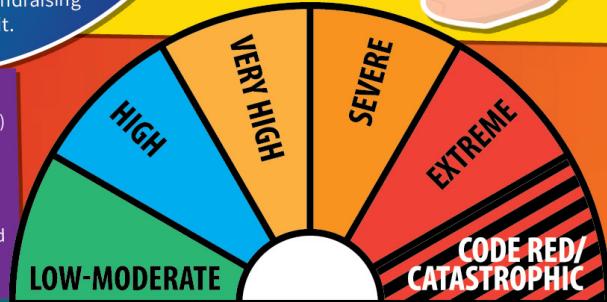


ATTENTION ALL SCHOOLS

We have brand new toys to donate to schools who have been impacted by the recent fires. If your school and students have been affected please email Aimi at aimi@yarramedia.com.au before the 28th Feb and she will be happy to add your school to the donation listing. Toys will be distributed throughout schools and can be used to bring a smile or for fundraising as your school sees fit.

FIRE DANGER RATING

In 2009, a standardised *Fire Danger Rating* (FDR) was adopted by all Australian states. During the fire season the Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) provides fire weather forecasts and by considering the predicted weather including temperature, relative humidity, wind speed and dryness of vegetation, fire agencies determine the appropriate Fire Danger Rating.



Fire Danger Ratings are a feature of weather forecasts and alert the community to the actions they should take in preparation of the day. Ratings are broadcast via newspapers, radio, TV, and the internet.

HOW STRONG WINDS AFFECT FIRES

Wind Direction →



Direct Contact
Flames are pushed forward by the wind, igniting new fuel.

Spotting
Small pieces of burning material are carried ahead of the fire, igniting new fires.

Air Currents
The passing wind is heated by the fire, which in turn heats up fuel sources ahead of the fire making them easier to ignite.

WHAT TO DO IN A BUSHFIRE EMERGENCY

If you live in a bushfire area, it's important to understand what to do if you ever get caught up in a fire and to have a plan. Bushfires can spread very quickly and be unpredictable, so the recommendation from every fire authority across the country is to 'leave early'.

When there is a severe, extreme or catastrophic/code red fire rating, households should leave for a safe area early in the morning or even the night before. Leaving it too late and trying to evacuate at the last minute can be extremely dangerous. A fire plan should include: when you will leave, where you will go, how you will get there, what will you take with you, how to prepare the house and property before leaving and what you will do if you cannot leave.



Crack the code below to find the important tip for bushfire safety.

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R	S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z
5	1	6	21	14	11	19	7	3	15	18	12	4	10	8	20	24	2	16	25	26	9	23	13	22	17

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