

## ***Leave Early or Stay and Defend?***

'*Bushfire*' doesn't just mean trees or forest; it also means areas such as scrub, grassland, crops, woodland and farmland. This means that all properties in the Colinton Brigade area of responsibility are at risk from bushfire. A **Bushfire Survival Plan** will help you and your family understand your general level of risk and assist you to make decisions that will give you the best chance of surviving a bushfire.

A key decision point is whether to Leave Early or Stay and Defend. Not all homes are defensible and not all people are able to cope with the ordeal of staying to defend their home. Leaving early is always the safest option.

The RFS advises that you **Leave Early** if:

- the Fire Danger Rating is CATASTROPHIC. Homes are not designed to withstand a bushfire during these conditions. Any fire that starts and takes hold will be so intense that it won't be safe to stay and defend any home – no matter how well prepared. **Leaving early is your only safe option.**
- the Fire Danger Rating is EXTREME or SEVERE and your home is not specially designed, constructed or modified to withstand a fire, or you are not well prepared
- you have young children, elderly or disabled people in your home. People who are vulnerable due to age, health, physical or any other reason, should always leave early.
- you have not prepared yourself or your property to give you the best level of protection from a fire.
- your house is not defensible. Some homes are not safe to defend due to their location or construction.

A plan to Leave Early means:

- Completing a Bush Fire Survival Plan at [www.rfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au)
- Planning where you will go, how you will get there and what you will take,
- Knowing the daily Fire Danger Rating in your area and what it means
- Having transport organised for all members of the family, including pets
- Having a back-up plan in case you aren't able to leave early enough. What other safer places can you get to?

You should never '*wait and see what happens*' during a bush fire. Leave well before a fire reaches your area and well before you are under threat. If you only have one route to safety, then you must also consider where the likely path of the fire is, in relation to this exit route. Leaving late will mean you are on the road when conditions are most dangerous, or you may not be able to get out at all. The longer you wait to leave, the greater the risk to your life.

## **New version of 'Fires Near Me' app**

The RFS released an updated version of the 'Fires Near Me' NSW smartphone application in December 2018.

The new version has the ability to send push notifications to all users, such as when there are emergency warnings, widespread total fire bans or other important statewide information.

The RFS is already building and testing the next version, which has a feature many people have asked about – watch zones, where you can set up an area to keep an eye on and receive automatic notifications when there's a fire near you.

Update your Fires Near Me NSW app on Apple or Android, and make sure you have push notifications turned on.

Never rely on just one channel of communication for your fire information.

Keep up to date with fire risk levels, Total Fire Bans and current bush fire activity through:

[www.rfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au)

[www.facebook.com/MonaroRFS](https://www.facebook.com/MonaroRFS)

<http://esa.act.gov.au/community-information/incidents-map/>

Local ABC radio and television

### **M & T MOTORS**



**24 Hour Towing - Mechanical Repairs**

**6452 5250 – 0414 484 180**

## ***Brigade activity***

Thank you to all our community for the care you have taken during the past three months. We have again experienced a low level of fire activity in our area. This is also despite extraordinary storm and lightning activity, extreme heat, a couple of Total Fire Ban days (TOBANs) and a few days rated as Very High Fire Danger.

**December:** Brigade members responded to a motor vehicle accident on the Monaro Highway.

**January:** A tree on the western side of Murrumbidgee River was struck by lightning. As the fire was inaccessible for our trucks, a helicopter inserted a team which successfully managed the fire.

Two trucks responded to a call for assistance from Michelago following another reported lightning strike to the south of Burra. Investigations by a Michelago truck failed to find the fire.

**February:** No call outs to date of writing.

## ***Fuel Loads***

Much of our area has seen renewed growth of African Love Grass after recent rains. Unless the grass is grazed or otherwise managed, this will mean an increased fuel load as the grass dies and dries out – or 'cures'. Within two weeks of the first frost, all African Love Grass will be 100% cured.

The more cured the grass, the more intensely it will burn and the quicker a fire will spread. You can reduce the risk to your property by mowing or slashing paddocks that will not be grazed, while the grass is still green. If you are using your grass for grazing, mow or slash along fence lines to help reduce the spread of a fire. Work with your neighbours to create a double-width firebreak along boundary fences.

**REPORT ALL FIRES – RING 000**

## Reflections on Black Saturday

The Black Saturday bushfires in Victoria in February 2009 saw the tragic loss of 173 lives and thousands of homes and properties damaged or destroyed.

Following on from that tragedy, fire agencies in NSW, and nationally, developed a number of broad-ranging initiatives, including:

- an increased focus on survival with a shift in advice away from a choice of 'stay or go', toward urging people to leave early.
- a revised Fire Danger Rating system, including the highest level of 'Catastrophic' to better reflect the magnitude of risk.
- implementing an 'Emergency Alert' telephone warning system via mobile or landline telephone to areas identified as under threat of impact from bush fires\
- educating communities to undertake personal planning and preparation for bush fires. The 'Bush Fire Survival Plan' provides step-by-step guidance through the process of preparing for and surviving a bush fire.
- checklists to review and improve Bush Fire Survival Plans using:  
[www.myfireplan.com.au](http://www.myfireplan.com.au)

Remember there may be a significant delay from the time you report a fire to when your local Colinton Brigade members may arrive on the scene. The better prepared you are to manage and respond to a fire at your property, the better the chance of a positive outcome.



**Weemala Weed Spraying Services**  
Michelago  
Michael Burton  
0407 003 392  
[weemala.weeds@gmail.com](mailto:weemala.weeds@gmail.com)  
You Got 'Em? I'll Spray 'Em

Emilio, Luiza and Julie have generously produced the Colinton Courier for many years at no cost. Please support them.



Unit 2, 10 Townshend Street,  
Phillip ACT 2606  
Phone: (02) 6281 7700 Fax: (02) 6281 0599  
Email: [print@phillip.kwikkopy.com.au](mailto:print@phillip.kwikkopy.com.au)

## Training

Colinton Brigade has welcomed five new members over the past few months. Over the weekend 23-24 February, we conducted some preliminary training for them in preparation for their attendance at a Bushfire Fighter basic course in March. Well done and good luck to Liz, Fred, Eilis, Ian and Elizabeth.

The Colinton Brigade conducts training every month on the second Saturday at 2.00 pm at the Colinton Fire Shed. Drop in and see what it's all about. Or, if you need any advice this is a good time to catch the Captain or any of the Deputies to have a chat.

## Fire Permit Officers

**Fire permits are required through to  
31 March 2019**

Captain Graham Povey  
02 6454 4150 or 0419 406 908  
Email: [colintoncaptain@icloud.com](mailto:colintoncaptain@icloud.com)

Senior Deputy Michael Burton  
0407 003 392  
Email: [fmburton64@gmail.com](mailto:fmburton64@gmail.com)

**REPORT ALL FIRES – RING 000**

# Lighting a Fire – Some Quick Facts

Download the complete Fact Sheet from <https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/resources/factsheets>

	<b>General Requirements</b>	<b>Total Fire Ban Days</b>
<b>Can I light a campfire on my property?</b>	<b>YES</b> , as long as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• you are burning dry seasoned wood AND</li> <li>• you have cleared areas of at least 2 metres around the perimeter of the fire</li> </ul>	<b>NO</b> <b>No fire is to be lit in the open on Total Fire Ban days</b>
<b>Can I light a gas or electric BBQ on my property?</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>YES</b> , as long as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• is under the direct control of a responsible adult AND</li> <li>• the ground within 2 metres of the BBQ is cleared of all materials which could burn.</li> </ul> As well as the following requirements for gas BBQs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• it is on a residential property within 20 metres of a dwelling and</li> <li>• you have immediate and continuous supply of water available</li> </ul>
<b>Can I carry out hot works such as welding, grinding soldering or gas cutting in the open</b>	<b>YES</b> , as long as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• you have adequate firefighting equipment in working order on site. As a minimum you must have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 16L knapsack spray pump filled with water or</li> <li>• 9L liquid fire extinguisher; or</li> <li>• 0.9kg dry powder fire extinguisher</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<b>NO</b> General purpose welding, grinding, soldering or gas cutting works cannot be carried out in the open on Total Fire Ban days
<b>Can I carry out harvesting operations? This includes driving or using machinery in any grass, crop or stubble land.</b>	<b>YES</b> , as long as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any heated area of the machinery does not come in contact with combustible matter;</li> <li>• The machinery is in a good and serviceable condition</li> <li>• The machinery is fitted with a spark arrestor (steam powered machines); and</li> <li>• You have the prescribed fire safety equipment on site as described above for hot works.</li> </ul>	<b>YES</b> , as long as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You follow the same General Requirements listed (left)</li> </ul> <p>Note: you should also check with your insurance company to understand your policy and 'duty of care' should your machinery cause a fire on a Total Fire Ban day</p>
<b>Can I light a fire in the open for burning an area of grass, stubble, weeds, shrubs or other excess vegetation?</b>	<b>Only in some situations.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During the Bush Fire Danger Period or when your fire is likely to endanger a building you must have a current Permit to burn issued by the NSW RFS</li> <li>• You must notify Cooma Fire Control Centre and any adjoining neighbours at least 24 hours before burning</li> <li>• Check the RFS publication 'Before You Light That Fire' <a href="http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au">www.rfs.nsw.gov.au</a> for more information</li> </ul>	<b>NO.</b> <b>No fire is to be lit in the open on Total Fire Ban days</b>
<b>Can I light a fire to burn a pile of leaves or other garden refuse?</b>	<b>Only in some situations</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The same conditions apply as for burning grass, stubble, weeds, shrubs, vegetation as described above.</li> </ul>	<b>NO.</b> <b>No fire is to be lit in the open on Total Fire Ban days</b>
<b>Can I light household garbage in an incinerator?</b>	<b>NO.</b> Burning of household garbage is prohibited in the Snowy-Monaro Regional Council area	<b>NO.</b> Burning of household garbage is prohibited in the Snowy-Monaro Regional Council area.