



2025/2026 KURRAJONG HEIGHTS COMMUNITY BRIEFING

A Presentation by the Kurrajong Heights Rural Fire Brigade
Saturday 20th September 2025



COMMUNITY BRIEFING



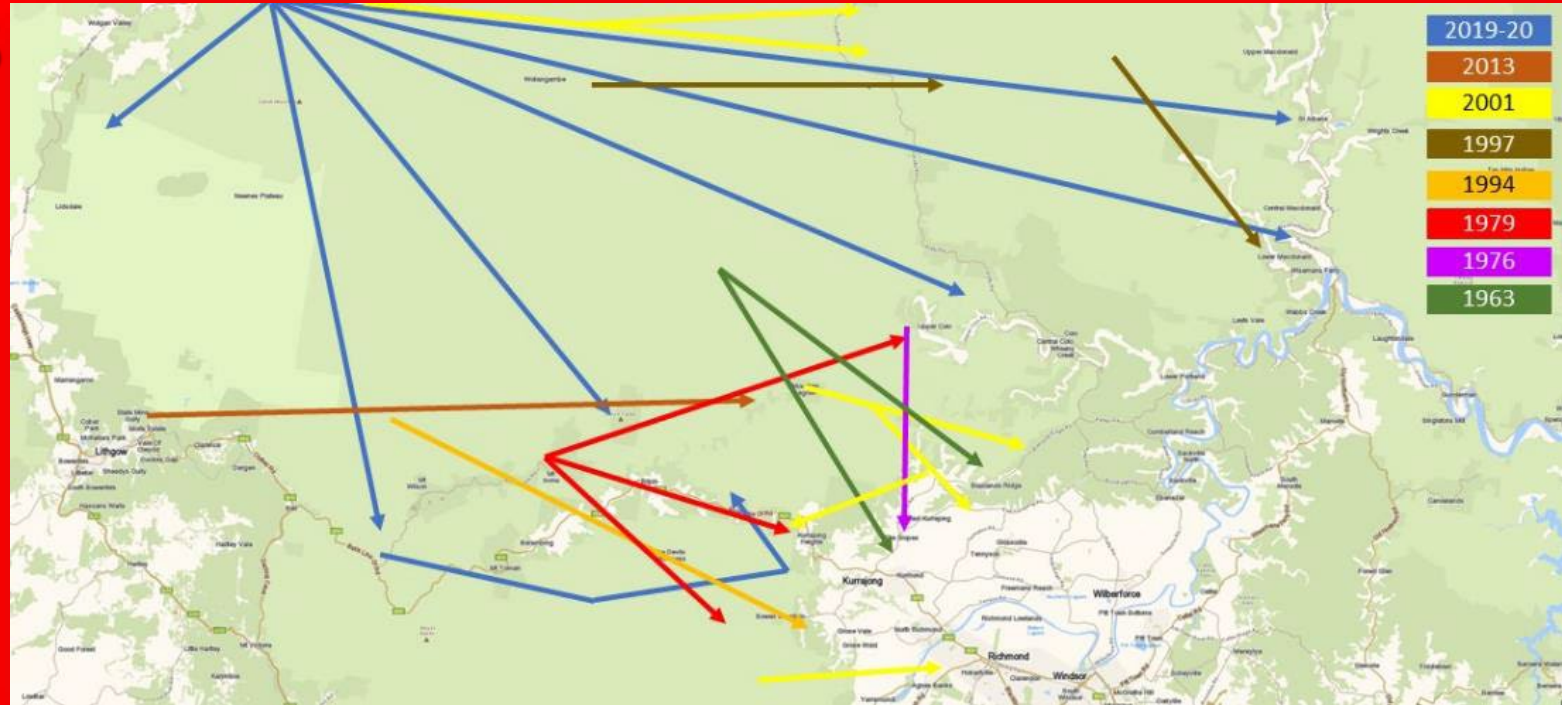
- HISTORY OF FIRE
- HARD TO DEFEND
- WHAT CAN WE PUT OUT?
- PREPARATION
- WHAT IS THE STATUS QUO?
- RFS RESPONSIBILITY
- COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY
- COMMUNITY OUTCOMES
- ESSENTIAL INFORMATION



HISTORY OF FIRE

FIRE HISTORY 1963 – 2025

- All recent fires have come from the West
- In 1976 and 2001 there were Northerly and Easterly threats
- The smallest gap between major fires is 3 years ... the largest is 15



If we live on the Heights, we know we will
have to face a major fire.

Every year we have to be prepared

HISTORY OF FIRE

GOSPERS MOUNTAIN FIRE

- On December 19th 2019 the RFS projections showed the fire overrunning the Heights
- The smoke caused an inversion layer to slow the wind, and the fire was coming towards the South of the Heights when a Southerly wind change turned it North where it impacted Bilpin
- If the wind change had arrived later...

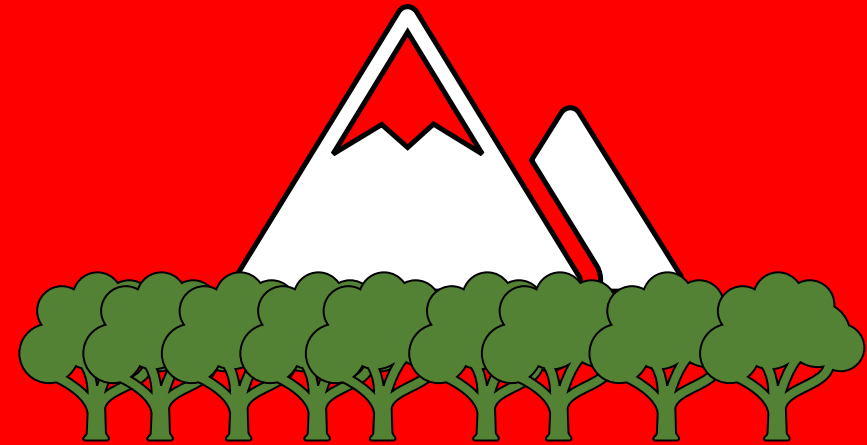




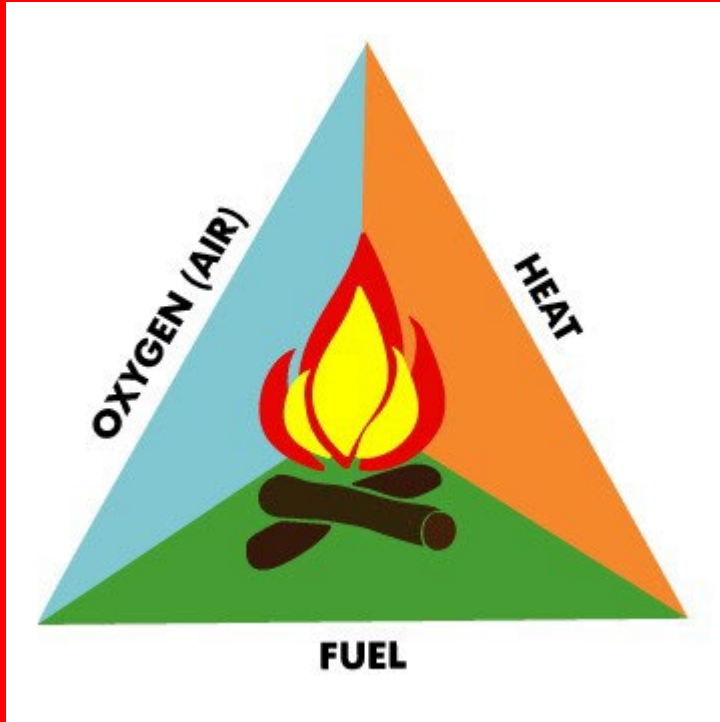
HARD TO DEFEND



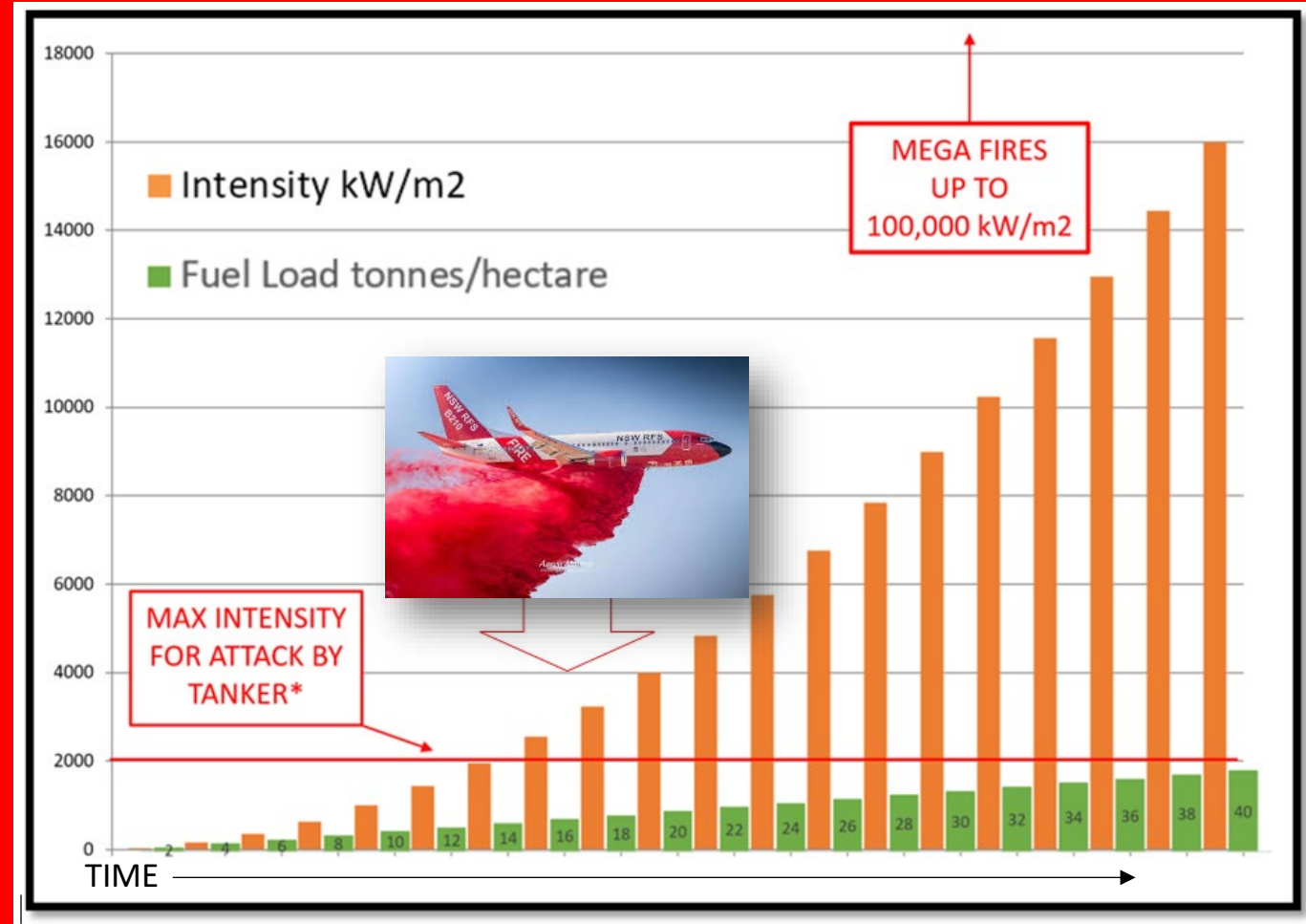
- We live on top of a mountain
 - Fire travels faster and hotter up hills
- We are surrounded by National Park ... its 69% of the Heights
- We're an isolated community with one road in and one road out



WHAT CAN WE PUT OUT?

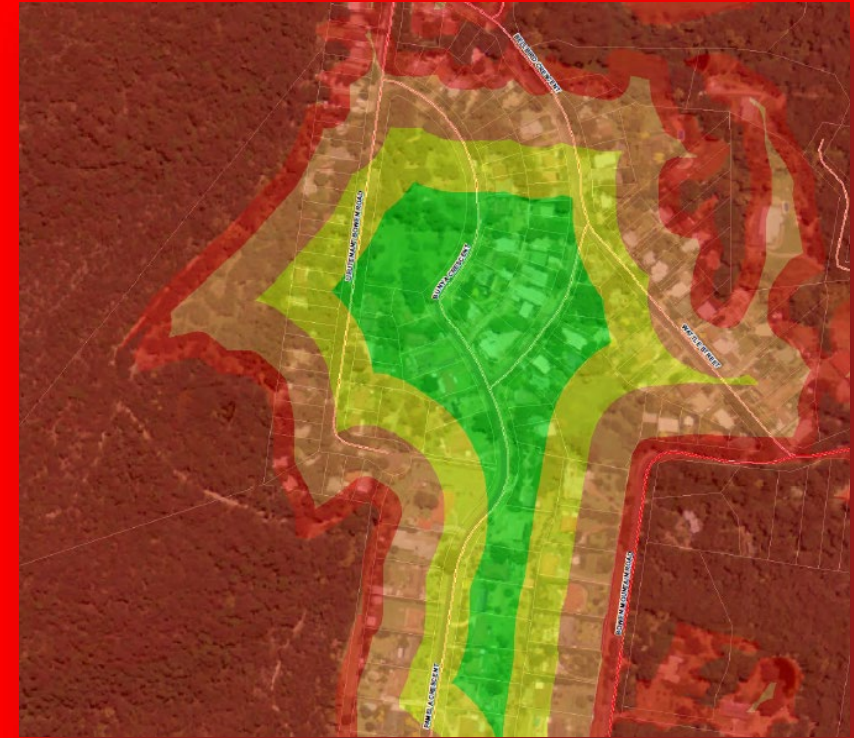
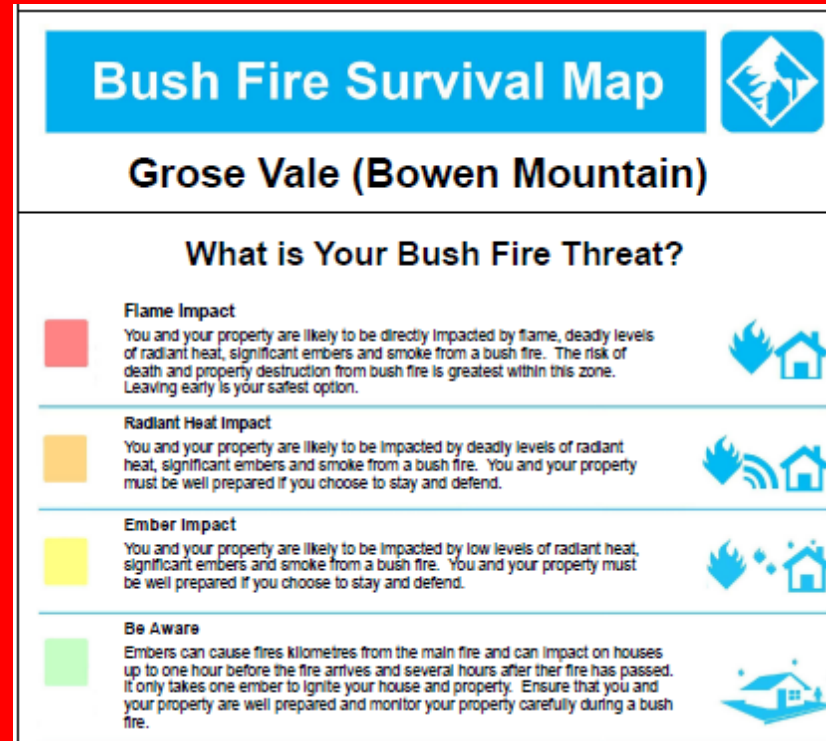


FUEL IS THE ONLY ELEMENT WE CAN MANAGE



WHAT CAN WE PUT OUT?

- We need to consider:
 - Direct flame contact
 - Where the home is directly impacted by flame
 - Radiant heat
 - Intense heat without direct flame contact
 - Ember attack
 - Burning embers are carried well ahead of the fire front
 - This destroys 85% - 90% of all homes lost to bushfire
- This is a Survival Map for Bowen Mountain



Embers can start a fire in your roof hours after the fire front has passed

WHAT CAN WE PUT OUT?

- We also need to consider the spread of the fire from house to house
- On January 18th 2003, we lost almost 500 homes and 4 lives in Canberra as the fire went from house to house
- In 2025 in California, they lost 10,000 homes in the Palisades Fire



Many of the houses to survive were fitted with a sprinkler system



WHAT CAN WE PUT OUT?



- Video shows what can survive a major fire at Senior Deputy Captain Mark Jol's house
- This fire self extinguished in a then recently burned area to the North of BLOR



<https://www.khrfs.org/mark-jol-video-gospers-mountain-fire/>



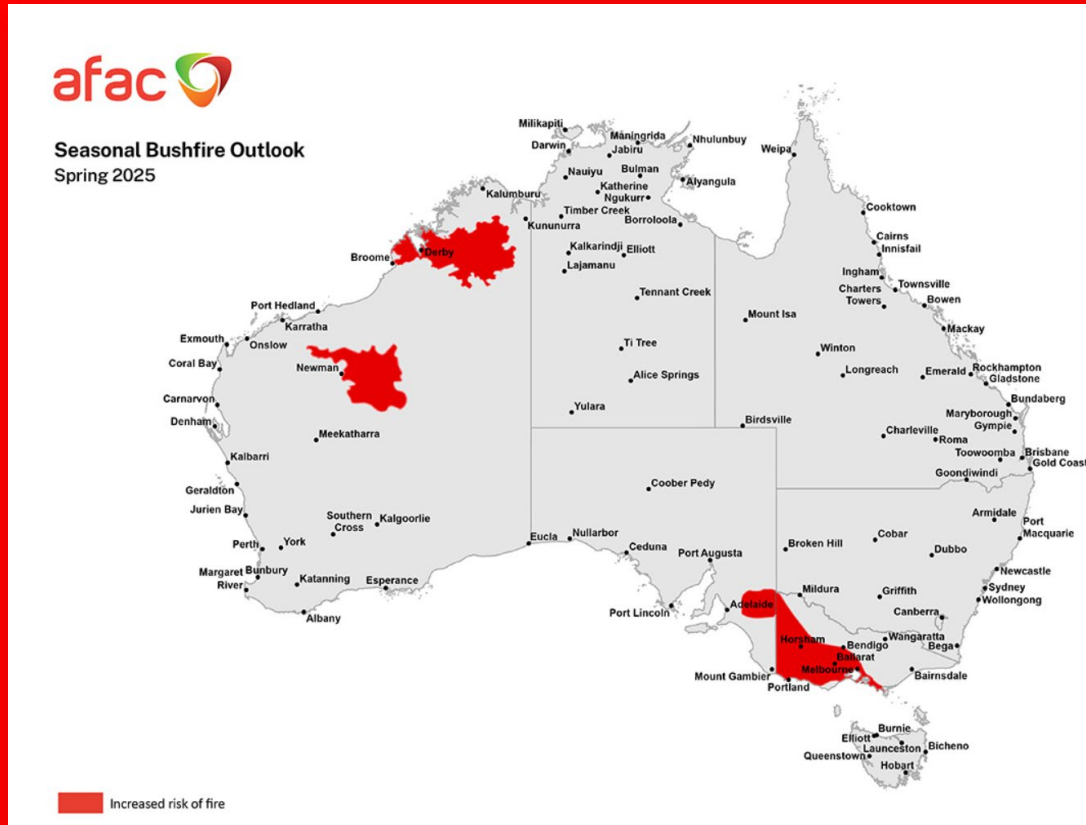
PREPARATION



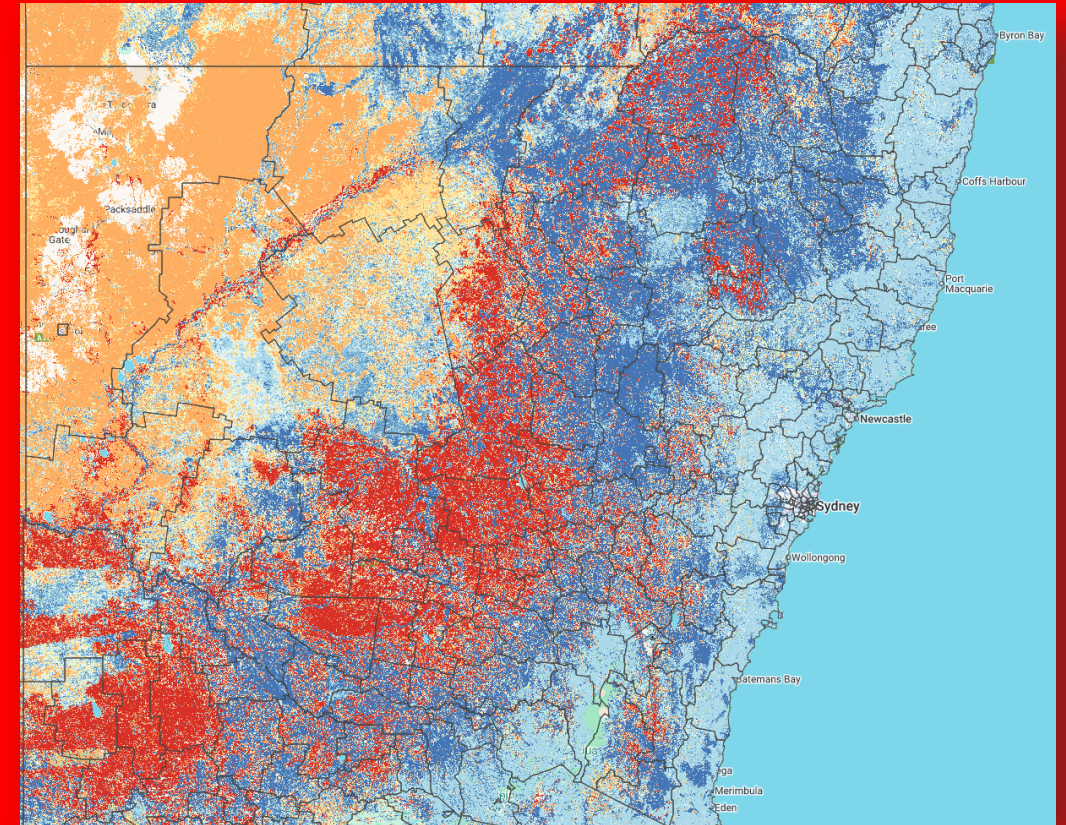
*THE RFS PROVIDES
HAZARD REDUCTION IN
THE SURROUNDING
AREAS*

*THE COMMUNITY IS
RESPONSIBLE FOR
HAZARD REDUCTION ON
THEIR OWN
PROPERTIES*

WHAT IS THE STATUS QUO?



AFAC has only highlighted an increased fire risk in three locations



The Australian Flammability Monitoring System confirms this view with flammability limited to parts of central NSW: <http://wenfo.org/afms/>



WHAT IS THE STATUS QUO?



The wet weather since the 2019/20 fire season has resulted in unprecedented growth in fuel levels combined with a very limited ability to do Hazard Reduction burns

Extreme 40°C to 50°C summer temperatures are becoming increasingly common around the world

Any future long hot dry spell will quickly reduce soil and fuel moisture levels and make us much more susceptible to major fires, just like we experienced with Gospers Mountain Fire

There is some potential for future major fires to be more extreme than previous fires

The longer we go without a major fire potentially the worse it will be

**SO, WE NEED TO BE
BETTER PREPARED
AND REDUCE FUEL
LOADS AROUND
OUR PROPERTIES
AND IN THE
SURROUNDING
BUSH**





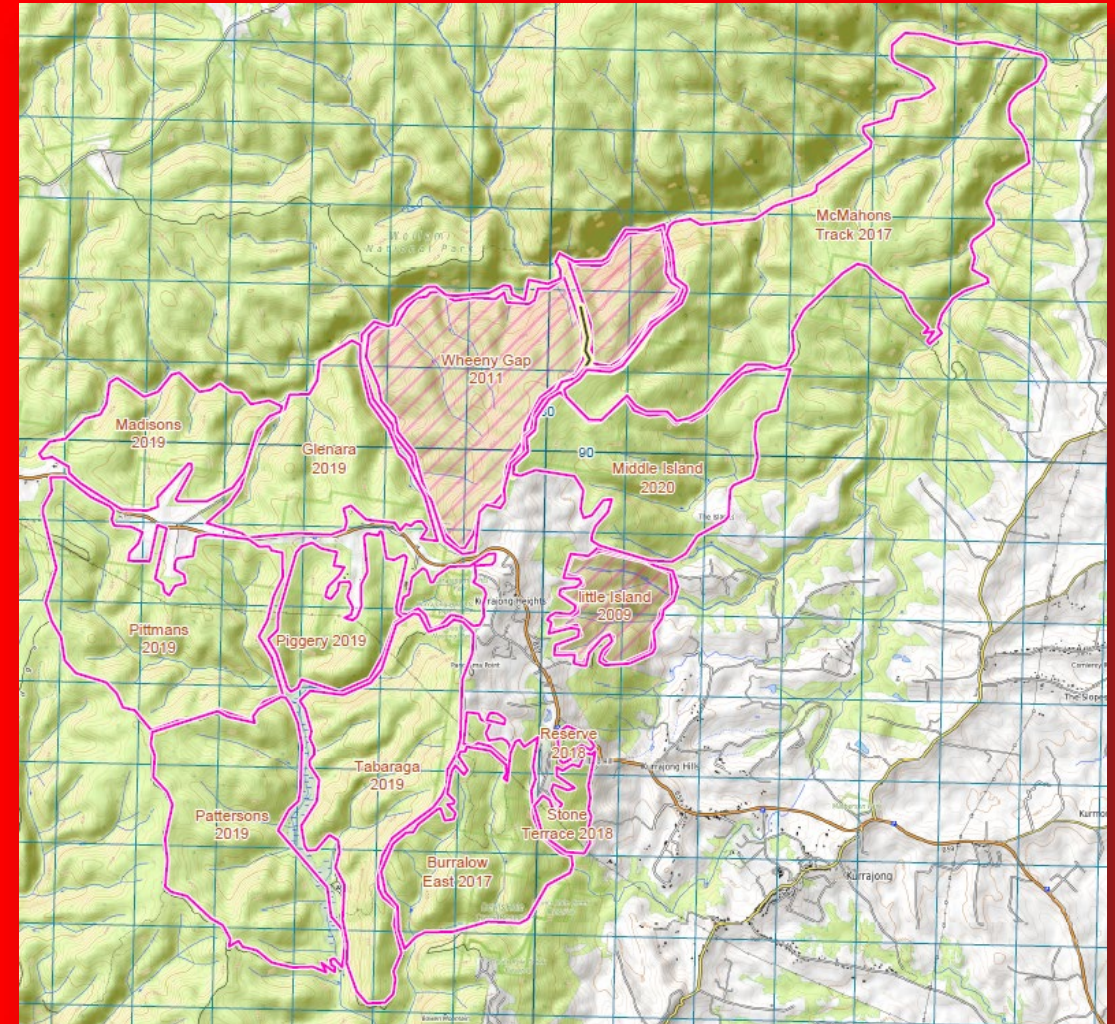
WHAT IS THE STATUS QUO?



Since Gospers Mountain we have only been able to do one major Hazard Reduction Burn in September 2020

WHAT IS THE STATUS QUO?

- We used mosaic-based hazard reduction burning to ensure that any approaching fire will have to cross a recently burnt part of the mosaic
- This is the current status
- Much of the area to the West and SW of the Heights was burnt on 21.12.2019 in a successful backburn ... but it has altered the mosaic
- We're working to restore it

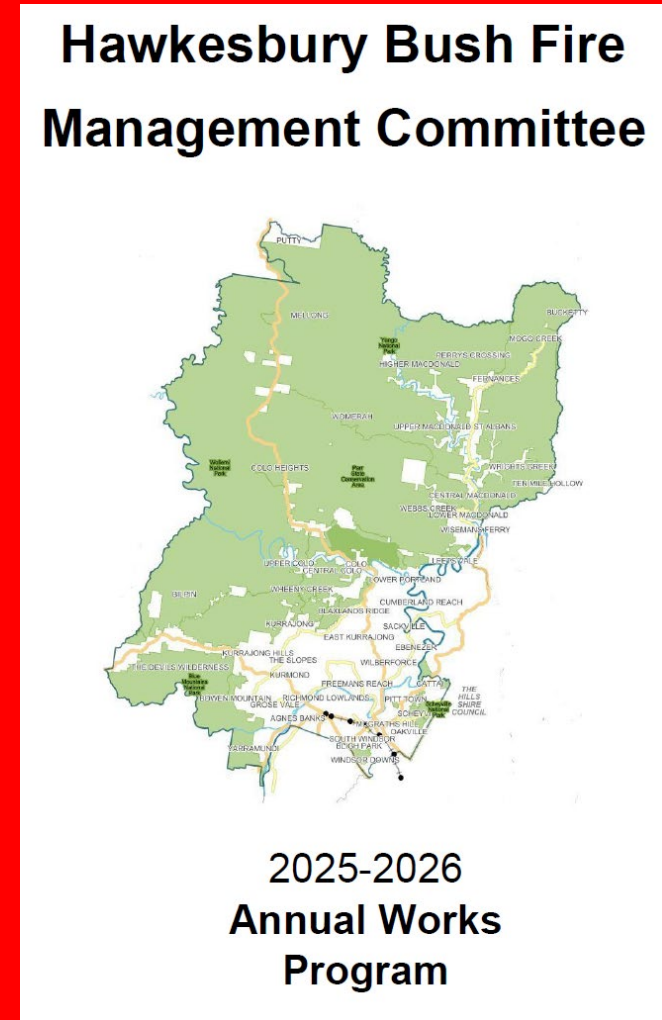




RFS RESPONSIBILITY



- Following the issue of the Draft Plan we have been issued the 2025-2026 Annual Works Program which details the most urgent Hazard Reduction Burns
- These are all imperative for the Heights

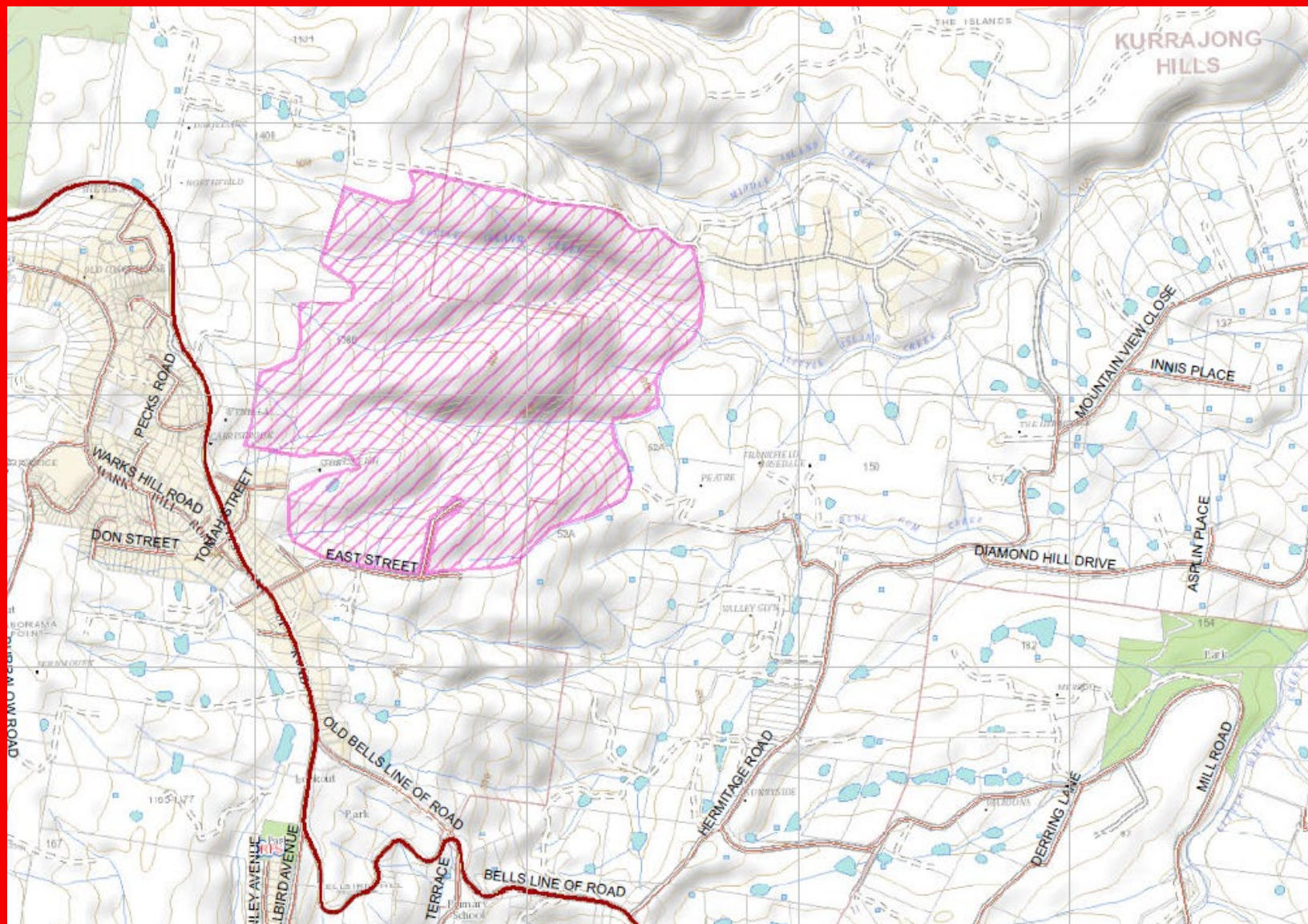




RFS RESPONSIBILITY



**LITTLE ISLANDS
RFS HR BURN**

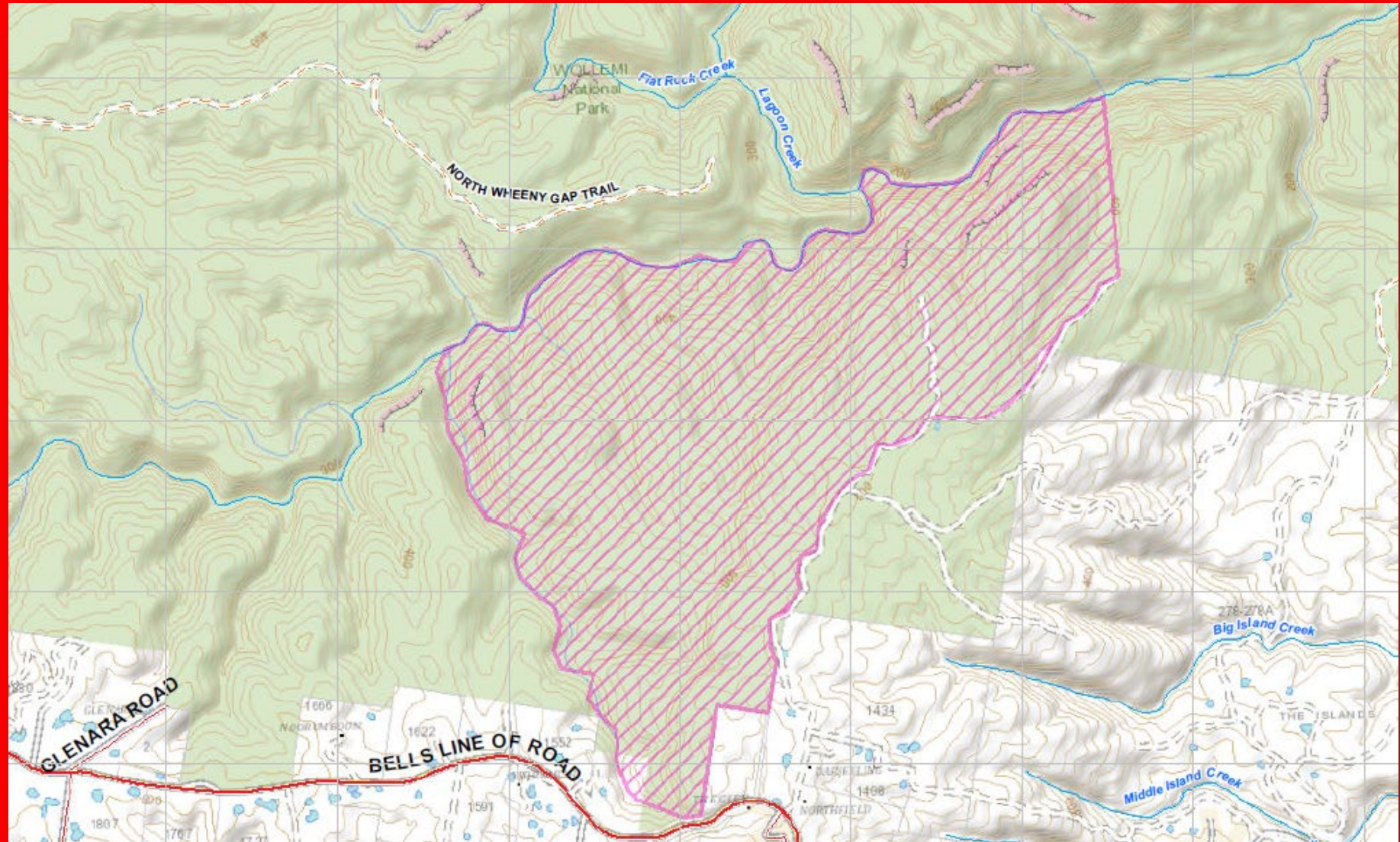




RFS RESPONSIBILITY



WHEENY GAP RFS HR BURN

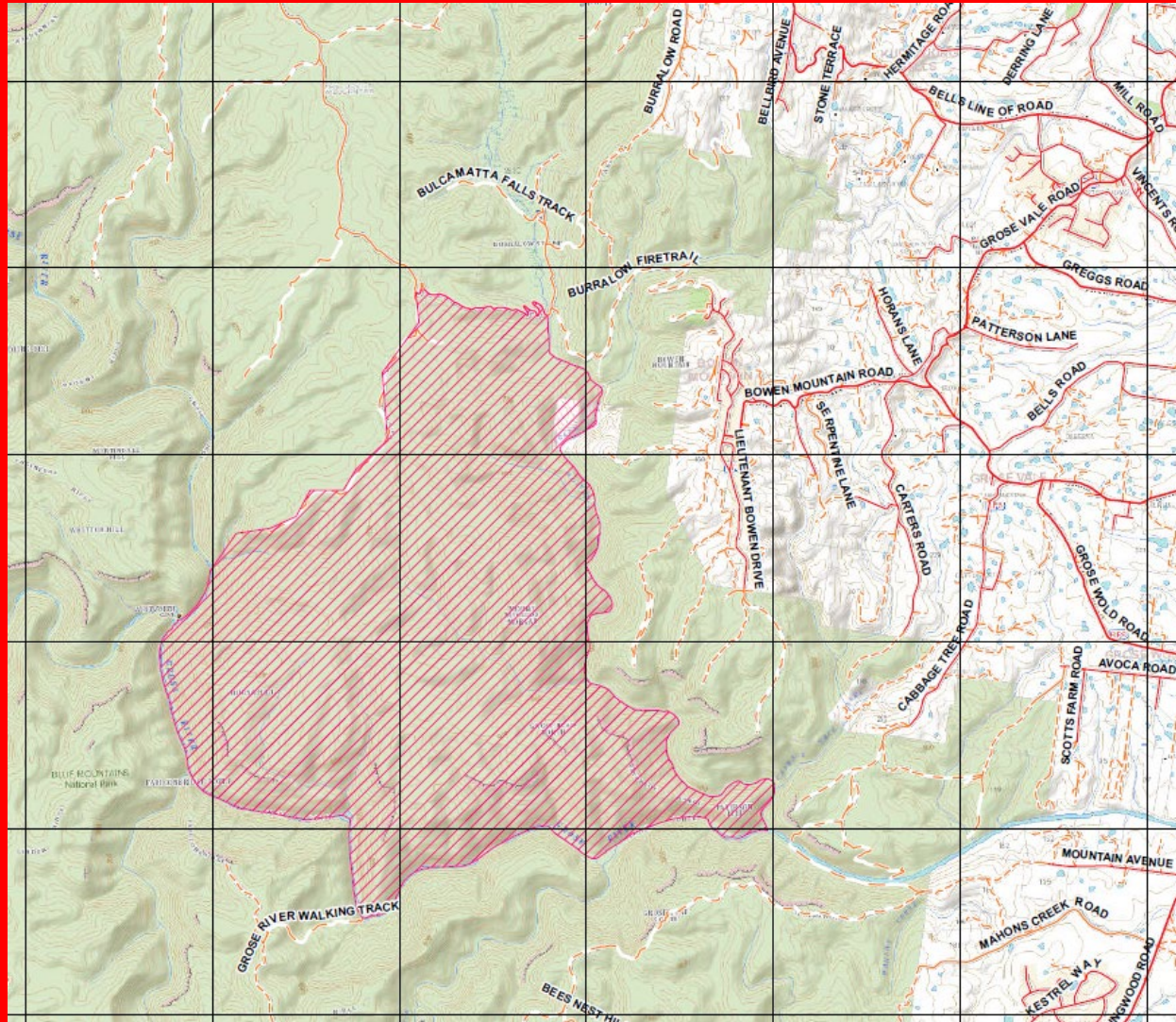




NPWS RESPONSIBILITY



BURRALOW CREEK WEST NPWS HR BURN





COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY



We started the Community Groups Program in June

- 10 – 15 families to form groups
 - Connect via WhatsApp etc
- Prepare and share their Bushfire Plans
- Identify where support needed – internal & external to the group
- Provide emotional support to each other





COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY



When we're up and running:

- Get accurate SWS information
 - Standing Water Sources
- Know where people are staying to defend and where people have evacuated
 - Our #1 priority is to preserve life
 - Our #2 priority is to preserve buildings
- This information is vital





COMMUNITY OUTCOMES



- We're looking to prepare a Kurrajong Heights Bushfire Plan based on the input from all the Groups:
 - Identify all the information we all need such as Safer Places, Water Sources, Aid agencies and a Directory with useful contacts
 - Target completion in 2026





ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

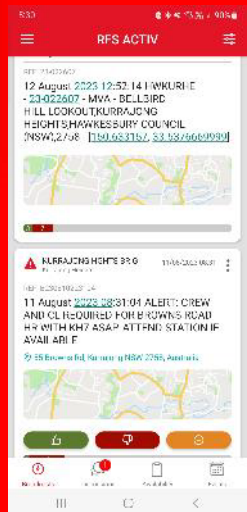


• OUR BRIGADE:

- 1 x Cat 1 Tanker
 - Delivered January 2023
 - 5 crew
- 1 x Cat 7 Tanker
 - 3 crew
- 62 Brigade members



Events are managed by the RFS using a Computer Aided Despatch system. When our brigade is called to an event our firefighters are paged on a mobile app called RFS Activ. They can accept or decline the page



ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

YOUR FIRE PLAN

- You can download the bushfire plan here:
https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/36597/BFSP-Complete.pdf
- You need to complete it as a family
- The BIG decision is whether to stay or go
 - It's best to prepare your place to stay .. as a fast-moving fire can mean its 'too late to leave'





ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

SHOULD YOU STAY OR SHOULD YOU GO?

DON'T LEAVE TOO LATE

- Up to one third of all bushfire deaths are caused by late leavers
- We only have BLOR. It can easily get blocked & Police may prevent access
- If you are not certain of having a clear evacuation route you should stay

DON'T BE AFRAID TO STAY

- Your house structure can protect you as the fire passes
- If you are well prepared, you can make the difference between the house surviving as well
- Many houses catch alight long after the fire has passed

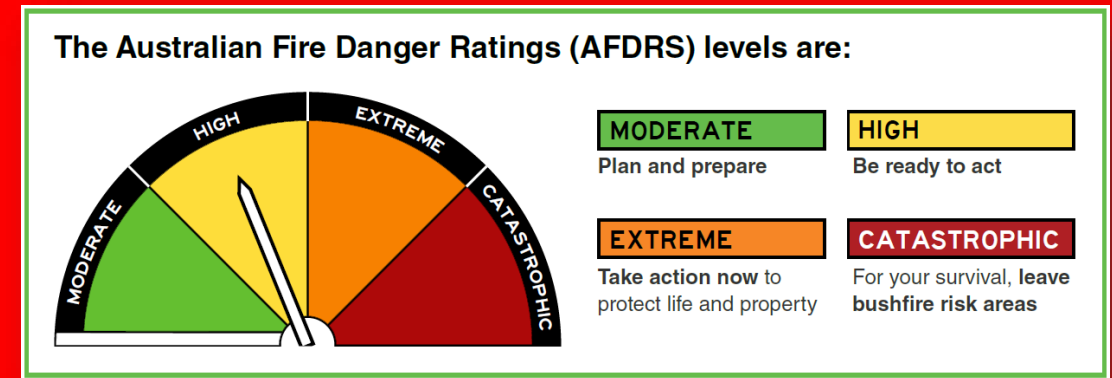


ESSENTIAL INFORMATION



FIRE DANGER RATING SYSTEM

- It's a new system so please familiarise yourself with it
- Full explanation on our website:
<https://www.khrfs.org/australian-fire-danger-rating-system-2/>





ESSENTIAL INFORMATION



PREPARING YOUR PLACE

- Keep some water for us please
- Prepare your home
<https://www.khrfs.org/fireproofing-your-home/>
- Plant Fire retardant plants
- Make sure we can get a tanker up your drive
- Invest in a fire pump & fit sprinklers to your house
- Get a generator
 - And then your electric water pumps will still work



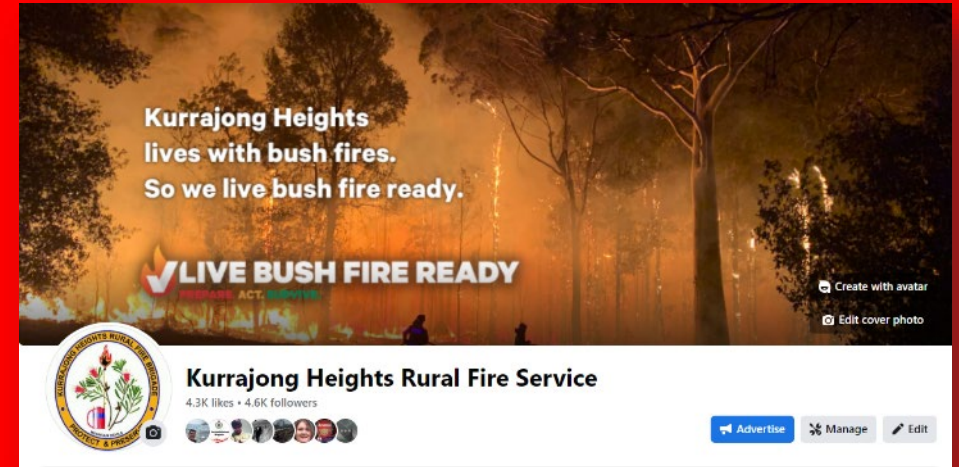


ESSENTIAL INFORMATION



STAYING INFORMED

- Monitor our Facebook page:
<https://www.facebook.com/KurrajongHeightsRFS>
- Download Hazards Near Me
 - the official RFS app
 - enter your location and receive alerts
- Share information within your Neighbourhood Group
- Lots more info sources on our website:
<https://www.khrfs.org/staying-informed/>



Our website: www.khrfs.org



SUMMARY



- Preparation is the key
 - Join or help form a Neighbourhood Group
 - Complete your Fire Plan
 - Prepare your place....don't wait until the fire is at The Fruit Bowl to decide to do something

*Talk to us about
becoming a volunteer*



BECOME A FULLY ACTIVE
MEMBER OF OUR
COMMUNITY