

BUSHFIRE PREPAREDNESS

BUSHFIRE ISN'T ONLY A PROBLEM FOR PEOPLE WHO LIVE "IN THE BUSH"

READY CLARENCE
VALLEY

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DISCLAIMER

This resource has been prepared by the Maclean District Business Chamber for Ready Clarence Valley as general community preparedness information only. The Chamber is not an emergency service or emergency management authority. Information is based on official sources considered current at the time of publication, but emergency conditions and official advice can change rapidly. Always check and follow current warnings, directions and advice from relevant emergency services and authorities. Consider your own circumstances and seek professional advice where required. To the extent permitted by law, the Chamber and its officers, members, volunteers, contractors and project partners accept no liability for loss, damage or injury arising from reliance on this resource.



PURPOSE

MACLEAN ITSELF IS STRONGLY ASSOCIATED WITH FLOOD RISK, BUT THE SURROUNDING LOWER CLARENCE INCLUDES BUSHLAND, GRASSLAND, FARMS, RURAL-RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES AND COMMUNITIES WHERE BUSHFIRE IS A GENUINE HAZARD.

NSW RFS publishes a specific Clarence Valley Bush Fire Risk Management Plan, which should be the formal basis for local bushfire risk rather than us creating our own risk classifications.



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Community preparedness information only.

Always follow current official emergency warnings and directions.

This resource supports bushfire preparedness and does not replace your NSW RFS Bush Fire Survival Plan, current emergency warnings or directions from emergency services.

KNOW WHETHER BUSHFIRE AFFECTS YOU

IF YOU LIVE IN OR AROUND GULMARRAD, ASHBY, WOOMBAH, ILUKA, CHATSWORTH, HARWOOD, LAWRENCE, TYNDALE, SHARK CREEK OR ANOTHER RURAL, BUSHLAND OR GRASSLAND AREA AROUND THE LOWER CLARENCE, BUSHFIRE SHOULD BE INCLUDED IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD EMERGENCY PLANNING. EVEN IF YOUR OWN PROPERTY IS NOT DIRECTLY THREATENED, BUSHFIRE CAN AFFECT:



ROADS AND ACCESS



ELECTRICITY



TELECOMMUNICATIONS



FAMILY MEMBERS
LIVING ELSEWHERE



SMOKE AND
AIR QUALITY



SCHOOLS AND
WORKPLACES



LIVESTOCK
AND PETS



EMERGENCY-SERVICE
CAPACITY.

Your first step is not to decide whether you think your property is “bushfire prone”. **Know your actual risk.** Use current NSW RFS and Clarence Valley bushfire information to understand the environment around your home and the places your household depends upon.



HAVE A BUSH FIRE SURVIVAL PLAN

NSW RFS USES A FOUR-STEP BUSH FIRE SURVIVAL PLAN



DISCUSS

WHAT WILL WE DO IF A
BUSHFIRE THREATENS?



PREPARE

PREPARE YOUR
HOME AND PROPERTY.



KNOW

KNOW THE BUSHFIRE ALERT
LEVELS AND FIRE DANGER RATINGS.



KEEP INFORMED

KNOW WHERE YOU WILL GET
RELIABLE INFORMATION DURING A FIRE.

YOUR READY CLARENCE VALLEY HOUSEHOLD EMERGENCY PLAN SHOULD WORK
ALONGSIDE, NOT REPLACE, YOUR NSW RFS BUSH FIRE SURVIVAL PLAN.

DECIDE NOW: WHAT WILL WE DO?

DO NOT WAIT UNTIL YOU CAN SEE OR SMELL SMOKE TO HAVE THE CONVERSATION

ASK EVERYONE IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD:

- ☒ WILL WE LEAVE EARLY?
- ☒ WHERE WILL WE GO?
- ☒ WHAT WILL MAKE US LEAVE?
- ☒ HOW WILL WE GET THERE?
- ☒ WHAT HAPPENS IF OUR USUAL ROAD IS UNAVAILABLE?
- ☒ HOW WILL WE MOVE OUR PETS?
- ☒ WHAT HAPPENS TO HORSES OR LIVESTOCK?
- ☒ DOES ANYONE NEED EXTRA TIME OR ASSISTANCE?
- ☒ BEGIN IMPLEMENTING LIVESTOCK OR HORSE PLANS IF RELEVANT
- ☒ CHECK VEHICLES AND TRANSPORT ARRANGEMENTS
- ☒ CHECK CURRENT ROAD CONDITIONS
- ☒ CONFIRM WHERE YOU INTEND TO GO
- ☒ KEEP MONITORING THE WARNING

WRITE IT DOWN

Our preferred safe destination:

Our alternative destination:

Our planned transport:

People we need to contact:

Animals we need to manage:

LEAVING EARLY IS THE SAFEST OPTION

NSW RFS IS CLEAR THAT LEAVING EARLY IS THE SAFEST OPTION.

THIS IS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT IF YOUR HOUSEHOLD INCLUDES:

- ✓ CHILDREN
- ✓ OLDER PEOPLE
- ✓ PEOPLE WITH DISABILITY
- ✓ PEOPLE WITH MEDICAL CONDITIONS
- ✓ PEOPLE WHO MAY FIND SMOKE PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT
- ✓ PEOPLE REQUIRING ASSISTANCE TO EVACUATE
- ✓ MULTIPLE PETS
- ✓ HORSES OR LIVESTOCK

NSW RFS ADVISES THAT PEOPLE WHO MAY HAVE DIFFICULTY COPING PHYSICALLY, MENTALLY OR EMOTIONALLY DURING A BUSHFIRE SHOULD PLAN TO LEAVE WELL BEFORE THEIR PROPERTY COMES UNDER THREAT.

IF LEAVING IS YOUR PLAN, LEAVE EARLY ENOUGH FOR THAT PLAN TO STILL WORK.

PREPARE YOUR PROPERTY BEFORE FIRE WEATHER

PROPERTY PREPARATION IS NOT SOMETHING TO BEGIN WHEN AN EMERGENCY WARNING APPEARS ON YOUR PHONE.

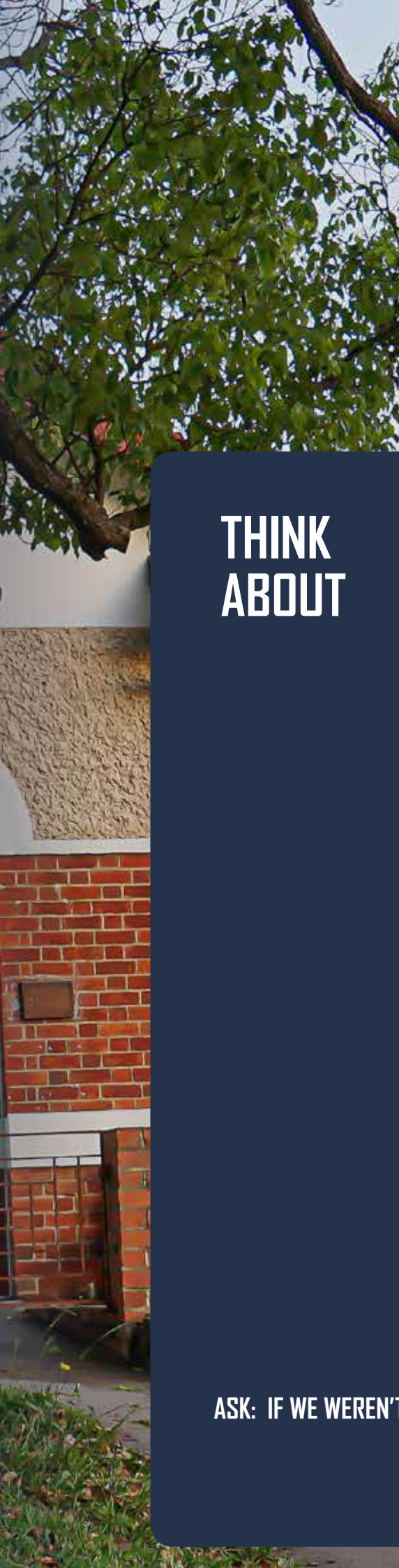
NSW RFS recommends practical measures including:

- Keep lawns short
- Clear leaves, bark, twigs and other debris
- Clean leaves from gutters
- Remove combustible material from around the home
- Trim vegetation appropriately
- Maintain buildings and repair damaged roof tiles or gaps
- Keep hoses in good condition and able to reach around the home
- Know where water supplies are located
- Keep access to your property clear
- Consider what outdoor furniture, fuel, gas bottles or other items could contribute to fire risk.

If you are physically unable to undertake property preparation, organise help before the bushfire season or periods of elevated fire danger.

MAKE SURE GATES AND PROPERTY ACCESS CAN BE IDENTIFIED AND THAT IMPORTANT ANIMAL AND EMERGENCY INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE TO WHOEVER MAY NEED IT.





RURAL PROPERTIES NEED MORE PLANNING

ON PROPERTIES AROUND THE LOWER CLARENCE,
BUSHFIRE PREPARATION MAY INVOLVE
CONSIDERABLY MORE THAN THE HOUSE.

THINK ABOUT

- ✓ SHEDS
- ✓ MACHINERY
- ✓ FUEL
- ✓ GAS CYLINDERS
- ✓ HAY
- ✓ FENCING
- ✓ PUMPS
- ✓ WATER TANKS
- ✓ LIVESTOCK
- ✓ HORSES
- ✓ ANIMAL FEED
- ✓ ACCESS GATES
- ✓ PROPERTY IDENTIFICATION

WHETHER EMERGENCY VEHICLES
CAN SAFELY ACCESS THE PROPERTY.

ASK: IF WE WEREN'T HERE, COULD SOMEONE ELSE UNDERSTAND OUR PROPERTY?

HORSES & LIVESTOCK CAN CHANGE YOUR TIMELINE

DO NOT MAKE YOUR LIVESTOCK PLAN: "WE'LL MOVE THEM IF A FIRE COMES."

MOVING HORSES OR LIVESTOCK CAN REQUIRE:

- ✓ FINDING ANIMALS
- ✓ CATCHING THEM
- ✓ LOADING THEM
- ✓ FLOATS OR TRUCKS
- ✓ MULTIPLE TRIPS
- ✓ SUITABLE DRIVERS
- ✓ SAFE ROADS
- ✓ SOMEWHERE APPROPRIATE TO TAKE THEM.

**NEVER PUT HUMAN LIFE AT RISK TRYING TO
MOVE ANIMALS ONCE CONDITIONS HAVE
BECOME DANGEROUS.**

THAT TAKES TIME. IF RELOCATION IS PART OF YOUR PLAN, DECIDE:

Where will they go?

How many animals need moving?

How many transport trips are required?

Who can help?

**What is our backup plan if relocation is
no longer safe?**



UNDERSTAND FIRE DANGER RATINGS

FIRE DANGER RATINGS TELL YOU THE POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCES OF A FIRE IF ONE STARTS. THE CURRENT AUSTRALIAN SYSTEM HAS FOUR LEVELS:

MODERATE
PLAN AND PREPARE.

HIGH
BE READY TO ACT.

EXTREME
TAKE ACTION NOW TO PROTECT YOUR LIFE & PROPERTY.

CATASTROPHIC
FOR YOUR SURVIVAL, LEAVE BUSHFIRE-RISK AREA

NSW RFS advises that on Catastrophic fire-danger days, homes cannot withstand fires in those conditions and people should leave bushfire-risk areas early in the morning or even the day before.

FIRE DANGER RATING ≠ EMERGENCY WARNING

They tell you different things.

Fire Danger Rating: How dangerous a fire could be if one starts.

Emergency warning: Information about an actual incident and what you should do.

You need to understand both.

UNDERSTAND BUSHFIRE WARNINGS

BUSHFIRES USE THE SAME THREE-LEVEL AUSTRALIAN WARNING SYSTEM INTRODUCED IN OUR WARNINGS & WHEN TO ACT GUIDE.



ADVICE
YELLOW

A fire has started. There is no immediate danger, but stay informed.



WATCH AND ACT
ORANGE

Conditions are changing and there is a heightened level of threat. Take action now.



EMERGENCY WARNING
RED

You may be in danger and need to act immediately.

THE ACTION STATEMENT WITHIN THE WARNING TELLS YOU WHAT YOU NEED TO DO.
DO NOT LOOK ONLY AT THE COLOUR.

SET UP HAZARDS NEAR ME BEFORE YOU NEED IT

USE HAZARDS NEAR ME NSW AND ESTABLISH WATCH ZONES FOR THE LOCATIONS THAT MATTER TO YOUR HOUSEHOLD.

FOR A LOWER CLARENCE HOUSEHOLD THAT MIGHT INCLUDE:

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☒ HOME | ☒ WORKPLACE |
| ☒ SCHOOL OR CHILDCARE | ☒ OLDER FAMILY MEMBERS |
| ☒ RURAL PROPERTY | ☒ HORSE OR LIVESTOCK PROPERTY |
| ☒ ANOTHER FAMILY HOME. | |

This is particularly useful because your household may be affected by a fire somewhere other than your own home.

But do not rely on an app as your only source of information. Continue monitoring NSW RFS and other official emergency information.

SMOKE CAN BE AN EMERGENCY TOO

YOUR HOUSE DOES NOT NEED TO BE DIRECTLY THREATENED BY FLAMES FOR A BUSHFIRE TO AFFECT YOUR HOUSEHOLD.

SMOKE CAN TRAVEL CONSIDERABLE DISTANCES AND MAY PARTICULARLY AFFECT:

- ✓ PEOPLE WITH ASTHMA
- ✓ PEOPLE WITH RESPIRATORY OR CARDIOVASCULAR CONDITIONS
- ✓ OLDER PEOPLE
- ✓ BABIES AND YOUNG CHILDREN
- ✓ PREGNANT PEOPLE.

IF SMOKE IS AFFECTING THE LOWER CLARENCE, FOLLOW CURRENT NSW HEALTH AND EMERGENCY-SERVICE ADVICE. IF SOMEONE IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD IS PARTICULARLY VULNERABLE TO SMOKE, INCLUDE THIS IN YOUR EMERGENCY PLAN RATHER THAN WAITING UNTIL AIR QUALITY DETERIORATES.



BUSHFIRE CAN AFFECT YOUR ROAD BEFORE YOUR HOUSE

THIS IS ANOTHER REASON TO LEAVE EARLY. BUSHFIRE MAY RESULT IN:

- ✓ ROAD CLOSURES
- ✓ REDUCED VISIBILITY
- ✓ FALLEN TREES
- ✓ EMERGENCY VEHICLES
- ✓ CHANGING FIRE BEHAVIOUR
- ✓ SMOKE
- ✓ DEBRIS
- ✓ TRAFFIC CONGESTION.

Never assume your usual route will remain available.

Check current warnings and road information before travelling. Do not drive toward a fire simply because that is your normal way home.

POWER OUTAGES

BUSHFIRES & SEVERE FIRE WEATHER CAN AFFECT ELECTRICITY INFRASTRUCTURE PREPARE FOR:

- ✓ LOSS OF REFRIGERATION
- ✓ LOSS OF COMMUNICATIONS
- ✓ LOSS OF WATER PUMPS
- ✓ ELECTRIC GATES OR GARAGE DOORS
- ✓ MEDICAL EQUIPMENT
- ✓ PHONE CHARGING
- ✓ INTERNET
- ✓ ANIMAL WATERING SYSTEMS
- BUSINESS EQUIPMENT.

If your property depends on pumps for firefighting water, understand what happens if mains electricity fails. Do not assume rooftop solar will automatically continue powering your home during a grid outage.

YOUR BUSHFIRE EMERGENCY KIT

YOUR NORMAL HOUSEHOLD EMERGENCY KIT IS THE STARTING POINT.
BEFORE ELEVATED FIRE DANGER, CHECK THAT YOU ALSO HAVE:

- ✓ BUSH FIRE SURVIVAL PLAN
- ✓ MEDICATIONS
- ✓ DRINKING WATER
- ✓ APPROPRIATE PROTECTIVE CLOTHING
- ✓ STURDY ENCLOSED FOOTWEAR
- ✓ P2/N95 MASKS FOR SMOKE WHERE APPROPRIATE
- ✓ BATTERY RADIO
- ✓ TORCH
- ✓ CHARGED PHONE
- ✓ POWER BANKS
- ✓ IDENTIFICATION
- ✓ IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS
- ✓ PET EQUIPMENT
- ✓ ANIMAL INFORMATION
- ✓ SPARE KEYS

KEEP YOUR KIT SOMEWHERE ACCESSIBLE.



AFTER A BUSHFIRE

DO NOT ASSUME AN AREA IS SAFE BECAUSE THE FIRE FRONT HAS PASSED. HAZARDS CAN INCLUDE:

- falling trees and branches
- damaged powerlines
- hot ground
- burning material
- damaged structures
- asbestos
- contaminated water
- injured wildlife or livestock

Return only when emergency services advise that it is safe.

If your property has been affected, photograph damage where safe, contact your insurer and retain receipts and recovery records.





WHERE TO GET LOCAL BUSHFIRE INFORMATION

USE:

NSW RURAL FIRE SERVICE FOR BUSHFIRE WARNINGS, INCIDENT INFORMATION, FIRE DANGER RATINGS AND PREPAREDNESS ADVICE.

NSW RFS

HAZARDS NEAR ME NSW FOR CURRENT EMERGENCY WARNINGS AND INCIDENTS.

BUREAU OF METEOROLOGY FOR WEATHER FORECASTS AND WARNINGS.

LIVE TRAFFIC NSW FOR CURRENT ROAD INFORMATION.

The Clarence Valley has its own formal Bush Fire Risk Management Plan, prepared through the Clarence Valley Bush Fire Management Committee. Use current RFS information rather than trying to determine your risk from community recollection or a previous fire.



STANLEY ST



KEEP
LEFT



THE LOWER CLARENCE BUSHFIRE RULE

DON'T ASK ONLY:

"IS THE FIRE NEAR MY HOUSE?"

ASK:

"COULD IT AFFECT THE ROAD WE NEED?"

"IS THE WIND OR FIRE BEHAVIOUR CHANGING?"

"DOES SOMEONE IN OUR HOUSEHOLD NEED TO LEAVE EARLY?"

"CAN WE MOVE OUR ANIMALS SAFELY?"

"COULD SMOKE CREATE A PROBLEM FOR SOMEONE IN OUR HOUSEHOLD?"

"IF WE DECIDED TO LEAVE NOW, COULD WE ACTUALLY DO IT?"

BECAUSE WHEN BUSHFIRE CONDITIONS DETERIORATE:

THE SAFEST TIME TO LEAVE MAY BE WELL BEFORE YOUR PROPERTY IS DIRECTLY THREATENED.





MACLEAN & LOWER CLARENCE HOUSEHOLD EMERGENCY PLAN

This resource is designed to support household preparedness and does not replace emergency service warnings, directions or advice. Conditions and emergency arrangements can change. Always use current official information during an emergency.

LIFE-THREATENING EMERGENCY: 000

NSW SES FLOOD, STORM AND TSUNAMI ASSISTANCE: 132 500

Prepared September 2026.

Local information checked against the NSW SES Clarence Valley Local Flood Plan, NSW SES Clarence Valley local flood information and Clarence Valley Council emergency information.