



HUFF STUFF

Newsletter

Issue 34

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Greetings everyone,

I hope that 2019 is a good year for you all. I know we have all been suffering in this oppressive heat wave, something we are not used to here in the high country especially for such a sustained period of time. Please keep an eye out for your older neighbours. Last week I met two lovely people, both in their late eighties, who had come up to spend time at their weekender. They have no fans, no air-conditioner and no screen on their front door so they have to keep the door closed. However, they have air conditioning in their Sydney home. My advice was to return to the cooler house and come back after this heat is gone as it was evident that the woman was suffering from the humidity.

I have had a few questions about how we, as HUFF Facilitators would receive information if an emergency were to occur. Our first go to would be *Fires Near Me* (remember it's on the RFS website as well as being an app). Incidents are put up quite promptly. For example, there was a callout last night to a reported fire in Megalong Valley. By the time the truck had rolled out of the shed, it was on the app.

The fires in Tasmania have been extensive and prolonged and you would have noticed the warnings coming across the bottom of the screen. If there were fires in the mountains that is how we would receive information as well. You will also

receive warnings on your phone, keeping in mind that mobile phone service is not reliable for some people. During an emergency you will be putting your own fire plan into action. Only if there is time, will you be making sure that those people in your street that need a heads-up are okay. It is usually after the immediate threat has passed or there is time for forward planning will you be in a position to pass on any relevant information.

Your role is most relevant in times of normality, when there is time to connect with your neighbours, identify those at most risk and assist them to develop an emergency plan. Remember, you can call me to assist with this process. Sharing the newsletter is always a good way to pass on information and encourage people to keep emergency planning foremost in their mind.

BRIGADES AT WORK

Our mountains brigades have been assisting with the fires burning in the Snowy Valleys LGA. There is currently no threat to property. A number of roads and campsites have been closed within Kosciuszko National Park. Strike teams have been deployed for five day stretches so it shows great commitment by our volunteers in difficult terrain and very hot temperatures. We have also had callouts to several trees down over the road the most notable being the huge gum tree that fell

onto the highway at Mount Victoria taking out power lines and stopping traffic for several hours. There have also been callouts to fires started by lightning strikes. Fortunately all of these were quickly brought under control.



Tree across highway at Mt Victoria

OPERATION FIRESTORM

Currently, the NSW RFS are working on a school program called Operation Firestorm. I was lucky enough to be invited to attend a workshop at the new RFS headquarters in Olympic Park last week to have input into the work done so far. This project is aimed at Year 5 and 6 students and is a component of the Stage 3 Geography syllabus. I am hopeful that Blackheath Public School will be selected to trial the program this year.

“This is a great opportunity for children and young people to better understand the impacts of natural hazards and bush fire specifically and the NSW RFS is keen to support students and teachers in this study.” NSW RFS

HUFF CATCHUP

I am intending to organize a meet-up in March as many of you have asked for this opportunity to meet and chat and sort out any issues. I am happy to do either evening or daytime or even both if

there is a need. Please let me know a) if you would be interested in attending and b) if you would prefer day or night.

MORE THAN 100 YEARS OF DATA...

This very interesting study is worth reading.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-12-27/bushfire-history-australia-data-saving-lives/10606144>

And finally, thank you to those who attended our review session with people from the Office of Emergency management. We had twelve facilitators attend and everyone had a chance to speak about their HUFF experience. You were all very supportive and positive. It will be interesting to read their findings which will be based on a variety of projects that were funded after the 2013 fires.

Regards,

Mina Howard