



HUFF NEWS

Issue 55 October 2021

Hello Everyone,

I hope you are doing well and are enjoying the warming weather and the spring flowers.

As you may know Cornelia has stepped down from her role as HUFF Coordinator at BANC so I will be looking after HUFF for the time being. I'd like to thank Cornelia for her excellent and diligent work and the way she connected us all.

In these past months COVID restrictions have made those connections tough, especially for those who don't use the internet. However, we're confident that will change with easing restrictions and we will soon have a lot more face-to-face opportunities. Which leads me to some exciting news!

NEW RESILIENCE HUB

BANC has been awarded a bushfire recovery grant to run a Creativity, Wellbeing and Resilience Hub in the upper mountains. At the hub in Blackheath and elsewhere we will host events and workshops to support community connection, social participation, information sharing and knowledge building - all shown to build individual and community resilience. We are currently in the planning stage and will be sending out a survey later in October asking the community to get back to us with the events, workshops, info sessions etc. you would like attend - and these will

definitely include bushfire preparedness events. Please keep an eye for this survey and share with everyone in your neighbourhood.

As always, October means the start of the Fire Season in the Blue Mountains. In this edition we have some great information on preparing over the coming months. I hope you'll pass this on to your neighbours and friends - especially those people that may have moved into the area since last summer.

GET READY EVENTS

As part of Get Ready Week, BANC, in conjunction with Get Online Week 2021 is making an easy to follow video on how to load the NSW Fires Near Me App on your phone. We'll be launching it on the BANC website on 22nd October 2021. If you or someone you know would benefit, please have a look. Fingers crossed we can have in-person workshops soon with video maker Simon from Cyber_Shed.



Also keep an eye out for the GET READY CALENDAR – a four-page wraparound in an October edition of the Blue Mountains Gazette that details ALL the interesting, fun, and informative events that Blue Mountains community organisations are putting on to help the community with their bushfire preparedness.

I would like to thank all facilitators for their work in the community and if you have any questions or comments please contact me at HUFF@banc.org.au. I'd also like to thank Jenny Crocker – the BANC Communication worker who has stepped in to help me with HUFF and in particular putting the newsletter out.

Cheers,
Cathy Rood

INTRODUCING BRIAN JEWELL



Hello all. I have taken over from Mina as the community engagement co-ordinator with Blackheath Mt Victoria RFS Brigade. It is a challenge given the huge impact Mina made over the years in this role.

I have been in the RFS for about eighteen years, four of which have been in Blackheath. My previous brigade was in the Mudgee area where I was the first Community Engagement Officer in a high-

risk area with many new 'tree changers'. My own home was at the end of a "one way in one way out" road below Windermere Dam. A beautiful but potentially high fire risk location.

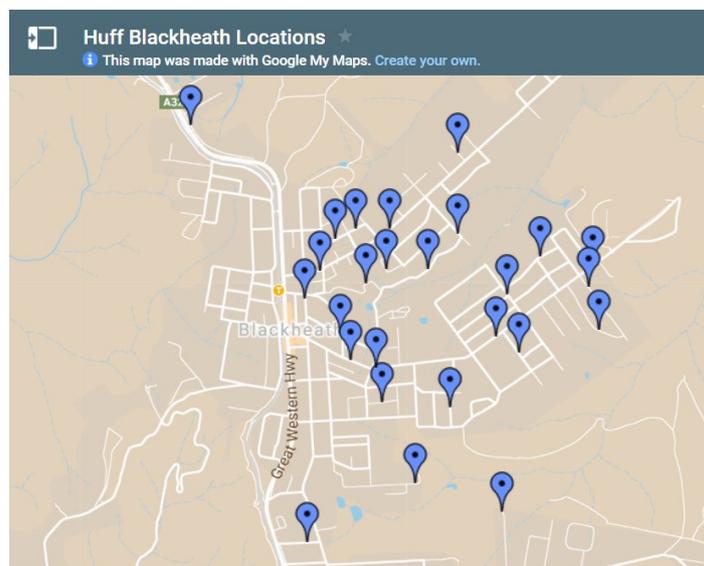
My introduction to local bushfires included the terrible 2019-20 season, where I was active with Blackheath crews in the Hawkesbury and our own District of Blue Mountains.

I am looking forward to helping you all prepare for the rapidly changing environment in which we are living. In my time in the service I have witnessed fire behaviour change dramatically. Major fires are increasing in number, intensity and duration. We live in one of the most spectacular places in the world but it is also one of the most fire-prone. My objective is to assist you to safely enjoy this magnificent place.

I look forward to supporting the HUFF facilitators in the valuable work they do with members of our community.

UPDATED HUFF WEBSITE

The HUFF website now has a new home on the BANC website, allowing us to add new information. It now features a clickable Google Maps tool which pinpoints the location of every HUFF hub and includes an address. People are directed to BANC's HUFF email address for more information and will pass on any relevant contacts or inquiries to the right facilitator. The old HUFF web address is still in use will take you to the new site.

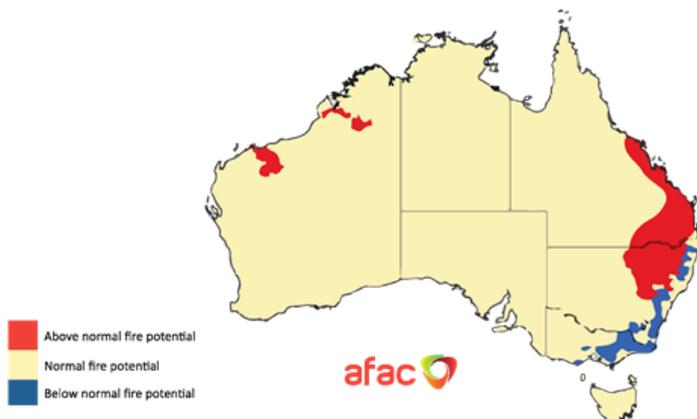


BUSHFIRE OUTLOOK SPRING 2021

AFAC, the National Council for fire and emergency services, has released this season's report on its website.

Below normal fire potential is predicted across the ACT, New South Wales and Victoria as a result of vegetation recovering from the 2019–20 bushfire season.

While most of Australia shows normal bushfire potential during the spring outlook period, destructive and deadly fires can still occur during normal bushfire seasons across Australia. Fire potential can vary greatly, even at the smaller scale, between bordering states and territories



WHAT YOU CAN DO TO PREPARE FOR THIS BUSHFIRE SEASON

Review, update, or prepare a Bushfire Survival Plan. You can request a hard copy of the fire plan preparation kit by calling Cathy at BANC on 4787 7770 or via email to HUFF@banc.org.au

One good source of information is the RFS Get Ready for a Bushfire brochure which you can download from the RFS website.

The Blackheath Area Neighbourhood Centre Facebook page also regularly posts fire preparedness and safety information, so check in there regularly. You can add your own thoughts and tips there as well.

HOME PREPARATION CHECKLIST

- Clean your gutters of leaves and twigs
- Install metal gutter guards
- Repair damaged or missing tiles on the roof
- Install fine metal mesh screens on windows and doors
- Fit seals around doors and windows to eliminate gaps
- Enclose the areas under the house
- Repair or cover gaps in external walls
- Attach a fire sprinkler system to gutters
- Keep lawns short and gardens well maintained
- Cut back trees and shrubs overhanging buildings
- Clean up fallen leaves, twigs and debris around the property
- Have hoses long enough to reach around your house
- If you have a pool, tank or dam, put a Static Water Supply (SWS) sign on your property entrance, so firefighters know where they can get water
- Check and maintain adequate levels of home and contents insurance. Ensure it is up to date.

Stay safe!