

BSafe

Blue Mountains Sustainable Approaches to Fire and Emergencies

A Community Action Model to build resilience,
improve preparedness and enhance self-responsibility

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Funded by the NSW Government under the Community Resilience Innovation program.
The views expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the views of the NSW Government

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Katoomba Neighbourhood Centre Inc. 2016

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Table of Contents

Executive summary	4
Recommendations	7
Background Research	9
BSAFE Blue Mountains Sustainable Approaches to Fire and Emergencies	10
A Community Action Model Building Resilience, Improving Preparedness and Enhancing Self Responsibility	10
<i>BSAFE Community Action Context</i>	11
<i>BSAFE Community Action Framework</i>	13
Shared responsibility	13
More Than a Fire Plan and Meet Your Street Follow Up Data	16
Gender, Age, Living Circumstances and Location	16
Preparedness measures	17
Conversations since attending	18
Confidence in dealing with disaster	18
Assistance required	19
Concerns re managing in an emergency	19
Influences	19
Initial Surveys - Analysis of Combined Program Data	21
Preparedness	21
Age groups	22
Location	22
Met new people	23
Extra help in an emergency	23
Conclusions	23
Meet Your Street Data Analysis 2015	25
Notification of event	26
Gender	26
Age	27
Living circumstances	27
Location to bush land	27
Preparations	28
Levels of response to questions	28
Comments	29
More Than a Fire Plan	32
More Than a Fire Plan Data Analysis	34
<i>Introduction and Summary</i>	34
<i>More Than a Fire Plan Data Analysis Tables</i>	36
Gender	36
Age groups	36
Number in household	36
Means of travel to event	36

Levels of preparation	37
Other Preparations	37
Where found out about workshop	37
Workshop outcomes	38
Reasons for attending.....	38
Most useful part of the forum.....	40
Improvements suggested	41
Heads Up For Fire 2015.....	43
<i>Introduction and Summary.....</i>	<i>43</i>
<i>Heads Up For Fire (HUFF)</i>	<i>44</i>
<i>History and Overview</i>	<i>44</i>
<i>Heads Up For Fire 2015 Evaluation Meeting.....</i>	<i>47</i>
<i>Heads Up For Fire 2015 Survey Analysis.....</i>	<i>49</i>
Gender.....	49
Age groups.....	49
Living Circumstances	49
Extra help in emergency.....	50
Proximity to bush land.....	50
Contact with neighbours	50
Work.....	51
Emergency preparedness	51
Comments Analysis	51
<i>Blue Mountains Neighbourhood Community Action Framework for Natural Disaster and Emergency Preparedness Workshop.....</i>	<i>53</i>
More Than a Fire Plan and Meet Your Street Follow Up Data Further data	54
Recommendations	62
Conclusions	64
Appendices	65
BSAFE List of Tools	66
References	79



Executive summary

The aim of BSAFE (Blue Mountains Sustainable Approaches to Fire and Emergencies) was to:

- review existing preparedness programs in the Blue Mountains LGA,
- gather and analyse participants and partner agency responses to, and evaluations of, each fire preparedness program,
- synthesize the best approaches from the identified successful components of each program and the resonant household narratives,
- build an exemplar model based on adaptability and transferability to other localities, and thus enhance community sustainability, and
- develop tools for and indicators of improved community resilience, capacity and engagement, risk mitigation and household preparedness in the context of natural disaster and emergency.

Preparedness programs evaluated under the BSAFE project have directly reached almost 700 households within the Blue Mountains, NSW. Although there were three different programs, all were aimed at enabling people to think about and commit to household preparedness measures. The three programs were: Meet Your Street, More Than a Fire Plan and Heads Up for Fire. The BSAFE research involved program coordinators and participants from all three programs. Data collection activities were designed to measure changes in household engagement with preparedness activities as a result of attending one of the three preparedness programs.

The findings of BSAFE demonstrate that more household preparedness events have been held in 2014-2015 and more households have been reached on the issue of bushfire preparedness, than in previous years. After the 2013 bushfires in the Blue Mountains a unique partnership was formed between community organisations and emergency services and this has contributed to a greater and more successful outreach than previously possible.

Of significance, the BSAFE research found that although 74% of participants from across the three programs said they had talked about an emergency plan within their households, 58% had actually made an emergency plan, although only 32% had practiced their plan. Follow up took the form of contacting participants in the programs, primarily by phone.

Across the three programs, follow up data was collected a few months after each program was delivered. The results demonstrated a solid increase in the proportion of people who had talked about a plan, created an emergency kit, prepared their house, and swapped contact details with their neighbours. More than half the participants across the three programs had had conversations in their street since attending a program and more than 60% reported having a conversation with particular neighbours about emergency situations. The follow up data also showed a significant increase in the proportion of people stating that they had practiced their emergency plan.

The total number of participants were fairly evenly distributed across the local Blue Mountains villages, with about half of all participants living close to bush land and one third of participants living two or more streets away.

There were significant differences between the programs in relation to the demographic attracted to each one. For example, Meet Your Street events attracted participants with children and typically less than 50 years of age. More Than a Fire Plan and Heads Up of Fire had a higher proportion of participants who were over 50 years of age. More than a Fire plan resonated with older women and people over 50 years of age. Heads up for Fire also attracted a higher proportion of participants over 50 years of age with a many above 60 years of age. A higher proportion of people attending Meet Your Street events attended with other family members, where More Than a Fire Plan attendees tended overall to attend alone.

Summary of findings for Meet Your Street

Meet Your Street events are focused around a barbecue, usually organised in a local village park. The events are attended by Neighbourhood Centre staff and RFS brigades, and children are catered for with childcare provided by Mountains Outreach Community Service. A survey is used as an engagement tool for staff to initiate conversations with people about their fire preparedness. Staff attempt to reach all those attending. Twenty-one events were held in the mid and upper mountains with 356 surveys completed.

At Meet Your Street events, an average of 33% of participants said they had met new people. As getting to know more people in the local area, and even better, in their own street, has been demonstrated to increase preparedness (Levac et al. 2011, Paton et al. 2008, Diekman et al. 2007) this alone can be considered a successful outcome of the Meet Your Street program.

The ideal number of workers required to enable the success of Meet Your Street events was four, not including childcare. Workers were responsible for the barbecue, cooking the food and handing it out, welcoming and engaging with people and conducting surveys.

Being nonjudgmental was an important element of the Meet Your Street events, as people were reticent to say what preparations they had in place at first, being concerned about how they would be judged.

Distribution of flyers and hanging banners in relevant areas proved to be the best method of letting people know about Meet Your Street events.

Summary of findings for More Than a Fire Plan

More Than a Fire Plan is a structured two-hour seminar held in central locations in the lower, mid and upper mountains with presentations from emergency services. It is designed to enable people to understand the functions of each service. The Rural Fire Service Engagement Officer provided a professional presentation on preparedness and a Red Cross member presented on emotional preparedness. Presentations from SES and Police were included where officers in future deliveries.

Four seminars were run across the mountains with about 25 attending each. More Than a Fire Plan was successfully advertised through the Gazette and the distribution of flyers. Two thirds of those attending were female and 82% were over 50 years of age.

Participants appreciated having the different organisations together and hearing experts from RFS and Red Cross speak on the subjects of property and emotional preparedness. Practical advice regarding packing medication and preparing ahead of time was appreciated. The RFS specifically mentioned, and many participants referred to the value of knowing, the distinction between leaving early and leaving in a hurry. The question and answer session was appreciated.

Summary of findings for Heads Up For Fire (HUFF)

HUFF aims to generate genuine connections between residents, the Emergency Services, local community groups and the Neighbourhood Centre. People who were willing to serve as street facilitators were drawn from designated areas in Blackheath and attended an Orientation Workshop offered by the local Neighbourhood Centre. Facilitators then contacted households within their street areas. In total 78 facilitators joined the HUFF program in 2015.

The HUFF program has attracted almost equal numbers of males and females, with 47% male and 53% female survey completions. It appears that connections are being made within the streets where facilitators have introduced themselves and already existing connections are recognised. It was noted that the information facilitators distributed to people was useful and that people were pleased to see 'something was happening'.

The BSAFE research highlights that HUFF facilitator responsibilities should not extend beyond themselves and making contact within their area. It should be made clear that they can recommend visits by RFS volunteers and access to other services and assist others in developing their plans, however HUFF

facilitators are not ultimately responsible for the safety of others. The absence of facilitators or RFS volunteers during a fire emergency should not impact on the ability of residents to enact their plans.

The HUFF program successfully raises awareness of people in local areas, their needs and how these can be addressed in times of emergency. It enables and facilitates connections and contact between people on a local street level. People over 50 years of age are the most likely to take up the role of facilitator and to have the time and ability to make contact with people in their areas.

Development of tools

Various tools developed for the BSAFE research have been made available in the Appendix of this report. These include engagement and discussion tools, as well as surveys. Follow up survey tools were also developed for each program. Examples can be found in the Appendix. Interested communities are encouraged to contact the BSAFE team to discuss tool use and program applicability and implementation.

The model is derived from the analysis of data from programs involving Neighbourhood Centres and other community organisations working in partnership with emergency services to deliver programs that prepare households, link them within neighbourhoods and to the broader community. In particular, vulnerable community members need to be linked to more levels of community to enable them to access assistance.

Major findings

Our conclusion is that the effectiveness of each program warrants each remaining as a standalone program, which together make a complete whole. Rather than selecting the most successful program, or selecting the most effective elements of each of the three programs and combining this into one program, we suggest a combined approach to delivery. Thus Meet Your Street is a good ground-breaker to raise neighbourhood awareness of the need for preparedness activities, and should be followed on by the delivery of More Than a Fire Plan, which is more of an informative workshop/seminar focused on creating plans, and requires participants to venture to a venue outside of their immediate street/s. At a More than a Fire Plan workshop residents will walk away with a more detailed idea of the planning required, an understanding of the emotional and psychological impact an emergency situation can evoke and the effect this can have on decision making. HUFF requires the specific commitment of a resident facilitator from within street areas. The HUFF program should be promoted at the other community events, especially Meet Your Street and More Than a Fire Plan.

All three fire awareness programs proved to be important in assisting to create a more prepared community, although each program was found to be important in different ways. To summarise, Meet Your Street attracts families with children to meet in their local area, More Than a Fire Plan provides more specific information due to the range of experts involved at central locations, and HUFF is effective in raising detailed awareness of households on a neighbourhood level. It was also identified that these programs could be adapted to target more vulnerable groups and individuals by modifying them in terms of length and limiting content to key messages and through one to one follow up support offered by the relevant organisation after attendance at a program i.e. follow up support and facilitation after attendance at a program to develop a plan.

All three core approaches have been designed using community development and capacity building practice frameworks to further strengthen them. The use of community education, community engagement, community participation and community capacity building is the basis for each of these approaches and speaks strongly to their transferability and sustainability, particularly when responsibility for delivery is accepted by locally embedded community organisations such as Neighbourhood Centres, working in partnership with emergency services and gazetted welfare agencies to deliver the programs. The three core programs comprising the BSAFE Community Action Framework appear to work best and attract more community interest and attendance when there is a tangible link to the need to be prepared. In the Blue Mountains this is best expressed at the declaration of the bushfire season and the high storm season. This would suggest the need for emergency services to be able to engage in and support the roll out of these programs in high season.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made on the basis of the BSAFE findings.

Recommendation 1

The BSAFE Community Action Framework be considered as a transferable model for community preparedness using a range of community engagement, participation and education strategies to increase community capacity around disaster and emergency preparation.

Recommendation 2

The unique partnership between emergency services and Neighbourhood Centres and other organisations formed to deliver preparedness programs in the community should continue to be developed and supported by local council, participating organisations and other relevant agencies into the future.

Recommendation 3

Neighbourhood Centres, due to their unique community connections and networks, are well placed to incorporate disaster preparedness activities into their core business. As a part of their mandate to build resilient and sustainable individuals and communities, Neighbourhood Centres should be delivering disaster preparedness programs as part of their core community capacity building business, not as an 'add-on' activity.

Recommendation 4

Emergency services particularly RFS and SES, be encouraged to review their abilities to engage in, support and resource the BSAFE Community Action Framework programs to be delivered in high seasons e.g. the dedication of an RFS volunteer or community engagement officer able to attend scheduled programs in bushfire season, even if appliances and more brigade members cannot be rostered to attend.

Recommendation 5

Meet Your Street is a first contact opportunity which is most effective when held in local neighbourhoods, especially in the lead up to the fire season. All elements of the program should be maintained, in particular the engagement/discussion and survey tool (Appendix 1) as these provide a stimulus for conversation and for households to think about their level of preparation.

Recommendation 6

More Than a Fire Plan should follow the delivery of Meet Your Street as it can be held in more central areas for larger numbers of people and its aim is to provide more detailed information regarding how to construct a household preparedness plan. It can be promoted at Meet Your Street events.

Recommendation 7

HUFF should also be promoted at Meet Your Street events, particularly where people nominate themselves as street facilitators. HUFF needs to be instigated within the area by neighbourhoods and requires committed residents to initiate and maintain it. Therefore active advertising for HUFF facilitators should be encouraged at all community fire awareness events. When there are sufficient numbers of interested street facilitators workshops could be held to train them.

Recommendation 8

As the data collection instruments are already developed, it makes sense that each of the three programs continues to collect information from their attendees at various points. This information can then be collated and compared with the other programs and deductions drawn as to the demographic attending, preparation plans and activities proposed, and in the follow up activities making a determination as to how many residents completed fire preparedness plans as a result of attending a program.

Recommendation 9

Further research regarding gender is required to explore the relatively low attendance of men at all programs. RFS could consider holding program at their brigade sheds where men are more likely to attend.

Recommendation 10

Networking opportunities between volunteer and other organisations need to be explored in order to provide services to the most vulnerable in the community: those on a low income, the frail aged, single parents and people with chronic conditions. Fore preparedness activities with which they may require assistance include tree removal, gutter cleaning and the like can be managed. The local council needs to better circulate what they are able to provide for vulnerable residents in need of fire preparedness assistance.

Recommendation 11

The responsibility of a HUFF facilitator for residents in their designated area, and for information they collect as part of the HUFF program, needs to be clarified through construction of a policy. Responsibility should be no more than raising awareness about the need for a plan and assisting with developing a plan for residents in their designated areas.



Background Research

Research in Australia and elsewhere has indicated that households are often not sufficiently prepared for the event of a disaster even in disaster prone areas (Cretikos et al 2008). Adequate preparation can help to reduce the immediate damage of a disaster as well as ensuring that people are able to look after themselves in the immediate aftermath of the disaster (Kapucu 2008).

Our previous research on connected communities indicated that there were people in the Blue Mountains community who did not have adequate resources or assistance available to them to manage in a disaster. These included people with chronic conditions such as mental illness, those living alone and those over 75 years of age. Some people are in all three categories (Redshaw, Ingham et al. 2015).

Preparedness includes developing family communication and evacuation plans, maintaining a disaster supply or emergency kit, and becoming informed about home emergency preparedness (Diekmann et al. 2007). As a key aspect of community resilience, preparedness is considered by some to include cultivation of well-being and intentionally engaging in preparedness, so that readiness becomes more than risk management; it becomes an integrative, fluid, and health promoting state facilitating adaptive postdisaster trajectories (Gowan et al. 2014).

The importance of community networks in the complexity of preparedness, includes personal and contextual factors such as health status, self-efficacy, community support, and the nature of the emergency (Levac et al. 2012). Interaction between neighbours has been shown to be effective in motivating people to prepare for disaster (Paton et al. 2008).

The importance of community level communications to which community organisations are integral has been shown by Kim and Kang (2010) who state:

Building a community-level communications environment where individuals can develop an integrated connectedness to different community storytellers (such as the local media, community organisations and neighbours) should be the first and most critical step in helping residents prepare for various natural disasters. (Kim and Kang 2010, p.484)

It was found that pre disaster messages about damage to communities was more likely to induce people to act. People are more likely to relate to damage to the community than to themselves as many at this stage believe 'it won't happen to me' (Kim and Kang 2010, p.484).



BSAFE Blue Mountains Sustainable Approaches to Fire and Emergencies

A Community Action Model Building Resilience, Improving Preparedness and Enhancing Self Responsibility

Preparedness is the process of developing a response and management capability before an emergency occurs in order to anticipate and address potential hazards so that needed resources are in place. At the community, local, state, and federal levels, this process includes establishing hazard detection and warning systems, identifying evacuation routes and shelters, maintaining emergency supplies and communication systems, establishing procedures for notifying and mobilizing key personnel, and educating and training responders, citizens, and community leaders. At the household level, a similar process should be followed, with a focus on developing a family communication and evacuation plan, maintaining a disaster supply kit, and becoming informed about home emergency preparedness. It has been documented that effective preparation and response to events due to natural hazards reduces morbidity and mortality, limits property damage, and minimizes disruptions in daily life (Diekman et al. 2007).

The BSAFE project was funded by the New South Wales Office of Emergency Management Community Resilience Innovation Program 2014-2015. It was designed to build and follow on from a number of stand-alone community engagement and education strategies and household preparedness learning practices. The research was undertaken through a partnership between the Blue Mountains community sector and local emergency service agencies as a function of the Blue Mountains Bushfire Recovery Community Well Being Resilience and Vulnerability sub committee, specifically the Vulnerable and At Risk and the Household Preparedness Working Groups (see attached Diagram 1). These community-focused readiness and preparedness programs and strategies were either developed or operated in the Community Well Being Renewal and Recovery space, and were largely independent of one another.

The major BSAFE project outcome will be the implementation of the proposed Blue Mountains Neighbourhood Community Action Framework for Natural Disaster and Emergency Preparedness (see Figure One). This plan reflects the analysis of data from across the three programs which have been delivered across the Blue Mountains LGA since the 2013 Blue Mountains bushfires:

- i. More than a Fire Plan
- ii. Meet your Street
- iii. Heads Up for Fire (and other emergencies)

More Than a Fire Plan is a structured two-hour seminar held in central locations in the lower, mid and upper mountains with presentations from emergency services enabling people to understand the functions of each one. RFS Engagement Officer provided a professional presentation on preparedness and Red Cross presented on emotional preparedness. Presentations from SES and Police were included where officers were able to attend.

Meet Your Street events are barbecues organised in local parks in different villages in the mountains. The events are attended by Neighbourhood Centre staff and RFS brigades and cater for children with childcare provided by Mountains Outreach Community Service. A survey is used as an engagement tool for staff to have conversations with people about their fire preparedness. Staff attempted to reach all those attending.

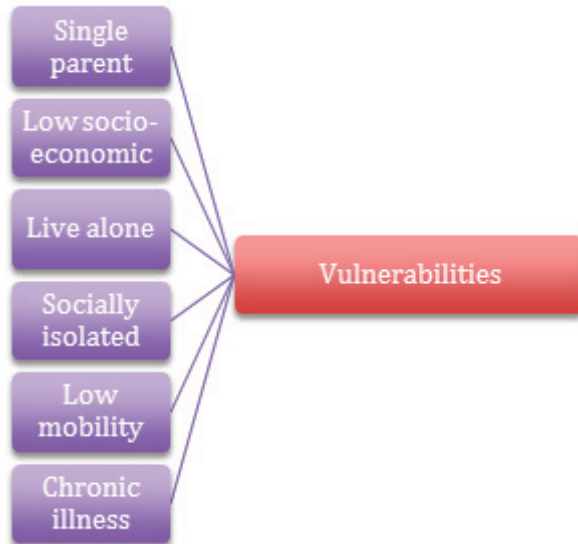
Heads Up for Fire aims to generate genuine connections between residents, the Emergency Services, local community groups and the Neighbourhood Centre. People who were willing to serve as facilitators for HUFF are drawn from designated areas and given a training workshop on the program. Facilitators then contact households within their street areas.

BSAFE Community Action Context

Blue Mountains Neighbourhood Community Action Framework for Natural Disaster and Emergency Preparedness has been developed out of a number of projects culminating in BSAFE Blue Mountains Sustainable Approaches to Fire and Emergencies.

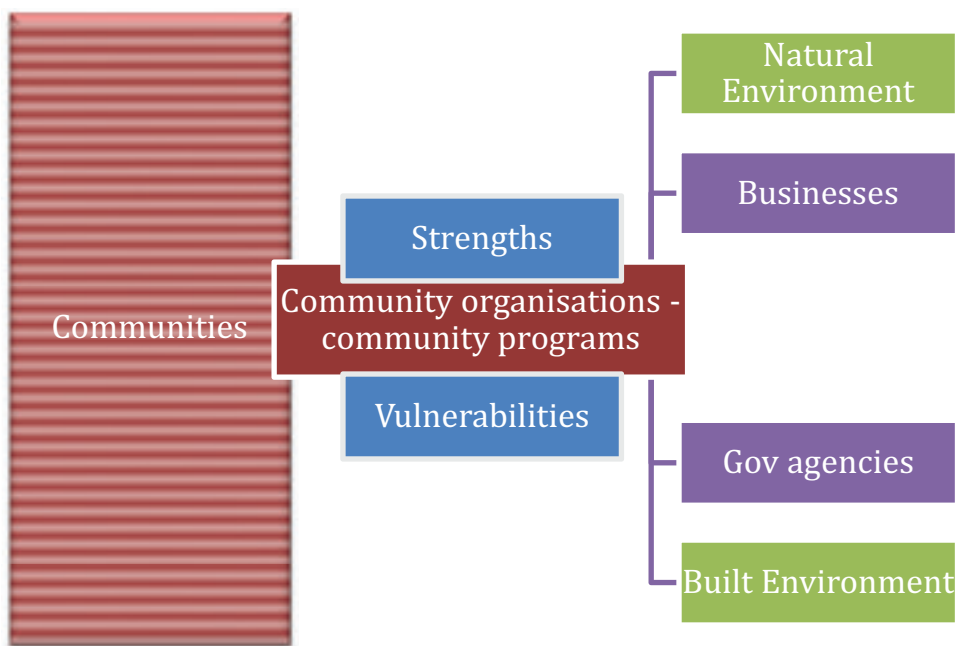
Community organisations are in touch with many of the most vulnerable community members including those who live alone, have a chronic condition or are socially isolated.

Figure 1: Vulnerabilities



Assessing community resilience requires involvement of organisations at all levels, especially local community level.

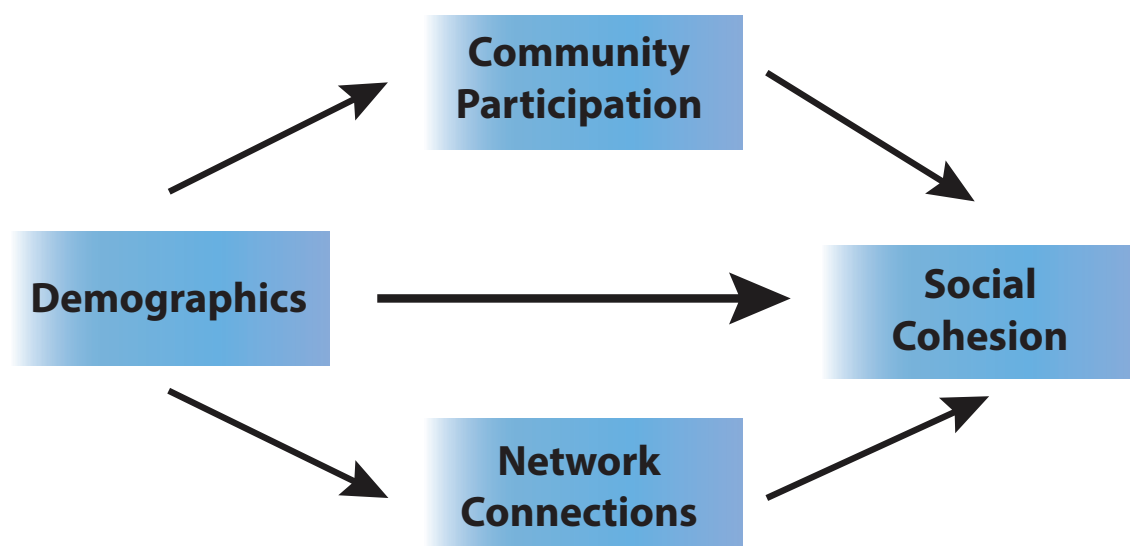
Figure 2: Community organisations as conduits



Community resilience is related to social cohesion and the strongest contributors to social cohesion are community participation and network communication. Demographics such as age, chronic condition and living alone contribute to community participation and network communication. Being connected

to the community means that people are more likely to feel safe, feel their neighbourhood is friendly and that they can get help if they need it (Redshaw, Ingham et al. 2015).

Figure 3: Community connection indicators



Community organisations in the Blue Mountains have had a significant role in response and recovery after the 2013 fires and have set up a structure where they are able to work with emergency services and the BMCC Emergency officer. This has meant an increasing involvement in preparedness across the Blue Mountains.

A number of programs have been run in the Blue Mountains with the involvement of the RFS and Australian Red Cross NSW through Neighbourhood Centres and other community organisations. This has been a unique collaboration where community level organisations have been able to reach out to the community generally as well as to some of the most vulnerable in the community.

Connections between households, neighbourhoods and communities are also important, particularly in addressing the needs of vulnerable community members where neighbourhoods are unable or unwilling to provide assistance.



BSAFE Community Action Framework

BSAFE has developed a transferable community action framework for improving individual emergency preparedness, enhancing self-responsibility and building community resilience. In order to generate the Framework, the BSAFE project evaluated and analysed multiple preparedness strategies implemented after the 2013 Blue Mountains bushfires, engaged extensively with the community and emergency services and based on the findings, developed the community action framework.

In the BSAFE research, Neighbourhood Centres and community organisations with strong community development expertise were identified as the most appropriate organisations to work as enablers in developing and implementing sustainable approaches to preparedness and readiness. This is because Neighbourhood Centres have strong existing connections with vulnerable community members and groups across their locations of interest. In addition, it was recognised that Neighbourhood Centres have experience in developing and delivering community education and development programs and a strong focus on networking and capacity building strategies with both individuals and groups.

The BSAFE Community Action Framework depends upon a partnership approach with local grass roots community organisations such as Neighbourhood Centres, and their incorporation of resilience and preparedness as core business (see Figure 2: Neighbourhood Centre role integration in resilience and preparedness).

The BSAFE Community Action Framework sees Neighbourhood Centres working in partnership with emergency services and emergency mandated welfare services to deliver four core community action strategies carrying the key messages around emergency preparedness:

1. Community Education - targeting individuals including vulnerable individuals - Volunteer/worker Assisted Learning for Safety, More than a Fire Plan, Develop your Emergency Plan clinics
2. Community Engagement - within streets at the peri urban interface – Meet your Street; Heads Up for Fire
3. Community Participation - within neighbourhoods - Heads up for Fire; Meet your Street
4. Community Capacity building - within communities – More than a Fire Plan

Shared responsibility

Sharing responsibility at a community level involves partnership with emergency services and other relevant government and nongovernment organisations with identified roles in disaster and emergency management e.g. Red Cross, RFS, SES and Police. Figure 1 illustrates how the partnership is able to connect with different levels within the community to provide programs at household, neighbourhood and community levels.



Figure 1: Model of shared responsibility



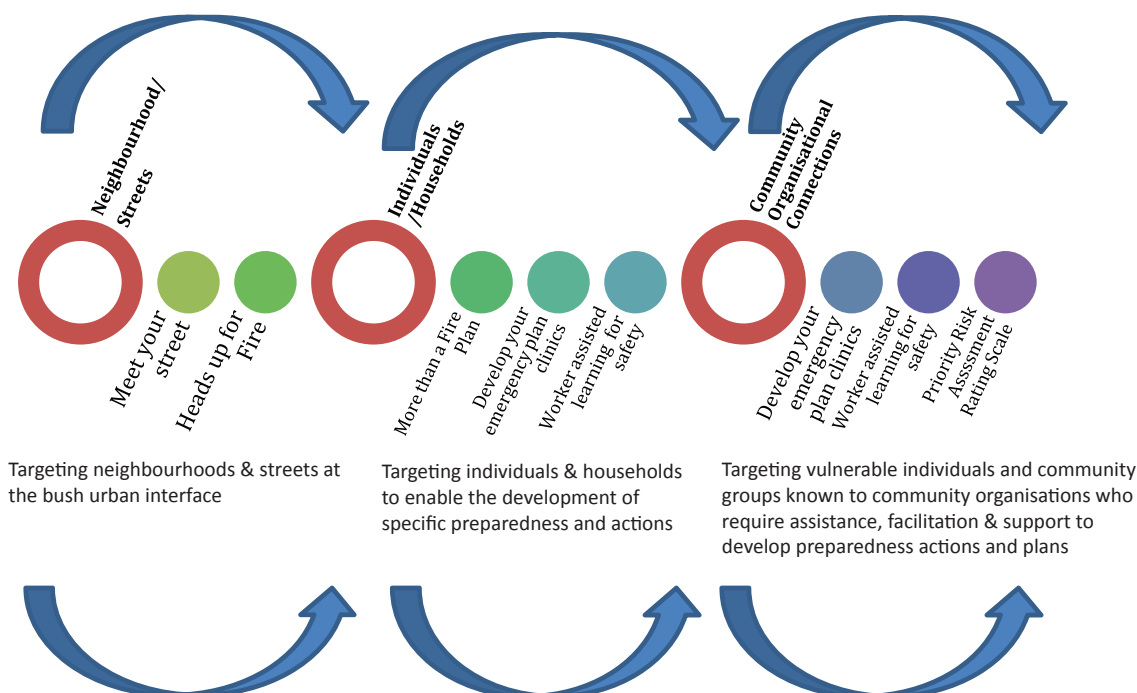
BSAFE Community Action Framework in Practice

Figure 2: Blue Mountains Neighbourhood Centres – Role Integration in Resilience and Preparedness

The neighbourhood/street approaches focus on awareness raising and understanding the need for knowing your neighbour and what preparedness means in your specific neighbourhood and streets. These strategies most attract families and younger individuals and are maximised when they feed into the more detailed and focused strategies that assist individuals and households around preparedness planning and action. Community organisations and emergency services partner to deliver.

The individual and household approaches are run centrally within the broader community and facilitated by the partner agencies - welfare, emergency services and community services around key preparedness message and emotional and psychological preparedness education. These strategies most attract the over 50 years age group and have a strong resonance with women. They are most effective when participants are also drawn from the neighbourhood/street programs.

Community and organisational connection approaches are the same core approaches utilised for individuals and households however have been adapted and target vulnerable and at risk individuals within the community, known to organisations. These individuals are assessed as having higher needs and require increased help or 1:1 input to assist them to emergency plan, in their home or community context.



The Community Action Framework requires grass roots organisations to work with emergency services and welfare agencies to deliver key purpose-developed preparedness programs targeting specific groups across communities (Meet Your Street; More Than a Fire Plan; Heads Up For Fire). Additional components may be integrated into the programs for more vulnerable individuals and community groups, e.g.: Emergency Plan Clinics levered from Meet your Street; Volunteer training to assist older vulnerable clients plan for emergency.

Figure 3: Preparedness strategies in practice



More Than a Fire Plan and Meet Your Street Follow Up Data

Follow up surveys were completed by 41 More Than a Fire Plan participants and 20 who attended Meet Your Street. Most of these were the result of phone calls.

The follow up included questions on preparedness measures that could be correlated with original surveys and additional questions relating to conversations and events that had occurred since attending the program.

Higher proportions of those attending More Than a Fire Plan had had conversations within their street (54%), with neighbours and others outside their area (76% and 83%) since the workshop though 40% of those who attended Meet Your Street had also had conversations in their street, 60% with particular neighbours and 70% with other friends/family members.

Very few, only 5% from each, nominated emergency services as their source of assistance and 2% and 5% nominated a community organisation. The majority said they would not need help, 7% and 15% that family or friends would help them and 7% and 10% that neighbours would help. Two people overall said they did not know who would help them.

Ninety percent said they now had in place preparations of their house, 74% had street contact details and higher proportions had made an emergency kit and practiced plans than in the original surveys.

Questions were included on confidence in dealing with disaster. Levels of confidence were highest for 'staying in the house during a natural disaster resulting in power loss and closed roads in the area' and 'leaving the area during an emergency such as bushfire'. Levels were lowest for 'sheltering in your house during bushfire if no time to leave' and 'defending house in emergency e.g. bushfire in area'.

While six who attended More Than a Fire Plan said they had no concerns there was major concern expressed by many about roads and being able to get out of the area when necessary. Others mentioned age, emotional well being and physical limitations. Mobile phone reception was mentioned, having to stay and defend, neighbours not having prepared their properties and a 'tendency toward evacuation'.

Eleven Meet Your Street participants said they had no concerns with one saying 'pride myself that I am logical when necessary' and another 'hoping that HUFF training will help'. Roads were considered a concern and where you could go, ie. safe places.

Gender, Age, Living Circumstances and Location

Table 1: Gender

Gender	MTFP		MYS	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
n	25	16	13	7
%	61	39	65	35

For Meet Your Street there was a higher proportion of people under 50 years though for both the majority were over 50 years.

Table 2: Age groups

Age groups %	MTFP	MYS
< 35	0	10
35 to 49	6	15
50 to 69	56	50
70 to 84	33	25
85+	2	0
Total	41	20

A higher proportion of those who completed follow up surveys for Meet Your Street lived with a partner and children.

Table 3: Living circumstances

Living circumstances %	MTFP	MYS
Live alone	32	25
Live with partner	44	40
Live with partner and children	7	30
Others	10	0
Single parent	5	5
Total number	40	20

A higher proportion of those completing follow up surveys for MYS were located closer to bush land.

Table 4: Location

Location to bush land %	MTFP	MYS
2 or more streets away	17	15
Across the street	12	30
Back onto bush	24	30
In town	15	15
Next street	29	10
other	2	0
Total number	41	20

A higher proportion of people attended Meet Your Street events with other family members than More Than a Fire Plan which people tended to go to alone.

Table 5: Attended with other household members

% Attended with other household members	No	Yes	Blank
MTFP	46	41	12
MYS	25	75	

Preparedness measures

Ninety percent said they now had in place preparations of their house, 74% had street contact details and higher proportions had made an emergency kit and practiced plans than in the original surveys. Higher proportions of those attending Meet Your Street events said they previously had in place all measures except planning for when it is not possible to leave the house in an emergency such as a bush fire. Plan to do proportions were also higher for Meet Your Street participants with more people who attended More Than a Fire Plan saying they had measures in place now. It is difficult to draw any conclusions from this data because of the low numbers of completed follow up surveys.

Table 6: Combined Preparations

% Since attending event	Now in place	Plan to do	Previously in place
Talked re plan to leave early	16	16	65
Talked re plan to stay and defend	15	11	65
Plan if cannot leave area	22	29	42
Created emergency kit	18	40	40
Planned for unable to leave house	22	31	45
Practiced emergency plans	18	36	33
Prepared house	25	8	65
Have street contacts	20	23	54

Almost all were likely to prepare their houses for the summer bush fire season.

Table 7: House Preparation

% likely to prepare house for bushfire season	Very unlikely	Quite unlikely	Quite likely	Very likely
MTFP	2	2	32	63
MYS	0	0	35	65

Conversations since attending

Higher proportions of those attending More Than a Fire Plan had had conversations within their street (54%), with neighbours and others outside their area (76% and 83%) since the workshop though 40% of those who attended Meet Your Street had also had conversations in their street, 60% with particular neighbours and 70% with other friends/family members.

Table 8: Conversations with others since More Than a Fire Plan

% Since MTFP	Yes	No	Blank
Street conversations re emergency situations	54	39	7
Conversations with particular neighbours re emergency situation	76	15	10
Conversations with others outside area re emergency situations	76	22	2
Conversations with other friends and family members not living with you about emergency situations	83	15	2

Table 9: Conversations with others since Meet Your Street

% Since MYS event of the following:	Yes	No
Street conversations re emergency situations	40	60
Conversations with particular neighbours re emergency situations	60	40
Conversations with others outside area re emergency situations	50	50
Conversations with other friends/family members not living with you re emergency situations	70	30
Any further street gatherings	30	70

Confidence in dealing with disaster

Levels of confidence were highest for 'staying in the house during a natural disaster resulting in power loss and closed roads in the area' and 'leaving the area during an emergency such as bushfire'. Levels were lowest for 'sheltering in your house during bushfire if no time to leave' and 'defending house in emergency e.g. bushfire in area'.

Table 10: Confidence levels More Than a Fire Plan

% MTFP confident about:	1	2	3	4	5
Defending your house in an emergency eg. bushfire in area	22	22	27	15	10
Staying in house during a natural disaster resulting in a power loss and closed roads in your area	5	17	22	29	27
Sheltering in your house in a bushfire if no time to leave	24	24	17	15	20
Leaving the area in an emergency such as a bushfire	10	17	29	12	32
Rate how you feel facing an emergency such as bushfire	17	12	46	15	10

Table 11: Confidence levels Meet Your Street

% MYS confident about:	1	2	3	4	5
Defending house in emergency eg bushfire in area	20	15	35	30	0
Staying in house during a natural disaster resulting in power loss and closed roads in area	10	15	5	55	15
Sheltering in your house during bushfire if no time to leave	20	20	20	40	0
Leaving area during emergency such as bushfire	15	5	10	50	20
Rate how you feel re facing emergency such as bushfire	10	0	60	20	10

Assistance required

Very few, only 5% from each, nominated emergency services as their source of assistance and 2% and 5% nominated a community organisation. The majority said they would not need help, 7% and 15% that family or friends would help them and 7% and 10% that neighbours would help. Two people overall said they did not know who would help them.

Table 12: Assistance required both programs

% Which best describes your situation in an emergency	MTFP	MYS
Emergency services/civil defence would help me	5	5
Family or friends would help me	7	15
I don't know who would help me	7	10
I/my family wouldn't need help, I could evacuate myself	64	55
My neighbours would help me	7	10
People living in my home with me would help me	7	5
Someone from a community organisation would help me	2	5

Concerns re managing in an emergency

More Than a Fire Plan

While six said they had no concerns there was major concern expressed about roads and being able to get out of the area when necessary. Others mentioned age, emotional well being and physical limitations. Mobile phone reception was mentioned, having to stay and defend, neighbours not having prepared their properties and a 'tendency toward evacuation'.

Meet Your Street

Eleven said they had no concerns with one saying 'pride myself that I am logical when necessary' and another 'hoping that HUFF training will help'. Roads were considered a concern and where you could go, ie. safe places.

Influences

People were asked on the follow up survey 'What has been most influential in helping you with emergency preparations?'

More Than a Fire Plan Participant responses

Twelve specifically mentioned the seminar/workshop More Than a Fire Plan. Some people have taken advantage of all opportunities to attend events and receive assistance. Sources noted were RFS website, community meetings/seminars, Working at the Recovery Centre, More Than a Fireplan event, support from Springwood Anglican Churches and posts on Facebook from Winmalee Fire Brigade, Blue Mts Firewatch, the Bushfire Plan document, Neighbourhood Centre, experience in the RFS, experience of fire and conversations with neighbours, guidelines in salvation army book and the red cross book.

The kit that was provided that assists you to create your plan and emergency box. We had not thought of a few items that were on the list. Discussion during the workshop and hearing from the emergency professionals on what to expect.

Meet Your Street participant responses

RFS website, 'meeting at the park, meeting with other people in the area', reading the Bushfire Survival Plan, HUFF, conversations and information from the bbq, experience in SES and fire services and of fires.

Taking responsibility yourself, the bush fire brigade only helps, building and managing your affairs to accommodate that fact that you live in a fire zone.... cause it is going to burn



Initial Surveys - Analysis of Combined Program Data

Programs evaluated under the BSAFE project (Blue Mountains Sustainable Approaches to Fire and Emergencies) have reached almost 700 households, Meet Your Street having the most events and being the most attended. The number of surveys completed at each event gave an indication of numbers though there were attendees at some events who did not complete surveys. Table indicates the number of surveys completed and the number of events for each program.

Table 1: Events surveyed

Events surveyed	Number of events	No. of surveys
Meet Your Street	21	356
More Than a Fire Plan	6	177
Heads Up for Fire	6	157
Total	33	690

More events have been held in 2014-2015 and more households have been reached on bushfire preparedness than in previous years. Due to the unique partnership formed post 2013 in the Blue Mountains between community organisations and emergency services, greater outreach has been possible and more successful outreach.

Preparedness

Getting people to think about and commit to preparedness measures was the objective of the preparedness programs Meet Your Street, More Than a Fire Plan and Heads Up for Fire. Not all questions were included in the survey form for each program. Collated responses for each question from the surveys were between 513 and 639.

Table 2: Percentage of responses to comparable preparedness questions

% Actions	In place	Plan to do	No response
Talked about what I should do during an emergency	76	14	9
Created an emergency kit	43	36	20
Made an emergency plan	64	21	14
Practiced emergency plan	32	35	30
Prepared house	61	25	13
Have the contact details of my neighbours	63	16	18

It is evident that 74% of people surveyed across the programs said they had talked about an emergency plan although only 58% of those asked the question said they had made an emergency plan. Only 32% said they had practiced their plan and 41% that they had an emergency kit. Around 60% said they had prepared their house and had the contact details of neighbours. Twenty five and 22% respectively said they planned to do these things.

Where people did not respond to the questions this could be because they did not know what the question was asking, because they did not think it applied to them or because they were unwilling to undertake the actions.

With the exception of Heads Up For Fire, which had almost 50-50 male and female, events were attended by two thirds women and one third men.

Age groups

Knowing which age groups are most likely to attend an event is useful in determining the best preparedness measures. It was clear that more people under 50 years of age were likely to attend Meet Your Street events. These age groups are most likely to have families, jobs and multiple demands on their time.

Table 3: Age groups all

%	<34	35-49	50-59	60-69	70-84	85+
Meet Your Street	17	33	30	15	5	0
More than a Fire Plan	6	12	29	33	19	1
Heads Up For Fire	3	3	27	42	21	4

Fifty percent of attendees surveyed at Meet Your Street events were under 50 years of age whereas only 18 % of those surveyed at More Than a Fire Plan and 5.5 % for Heads Up of Fire were under 50 years of age. Meet Your Street also attracted more people over 85 years of age, possibly because it was held locally. There were fewer people in the 60-84 year age range however.

Living circumstances

Meet your street had the highest proportion of couples with children though it is difficult to determine how many from More Than a Fire Plan would have been couples with children or single parents as the question was presented differently.

Table 4: Living circumstances

%	Partner/2 people	2 plus people	Partner and Children	Single parent	Parents	Others	Alone
MYS	24		33	19	6	8	11
MTFP	2	74					25
HUFF	60		6	3	1	2	28

On More Than a Fire Plan surveys it was asked whether people lived with 1, 2 or 2 plus people. Of these, 74 % said they lived with 2 plus people which could be partner and children, parents or others. They have been distributed across the categories according to what is likely given ages. Those who said they lived in a household of 2 were taken as living with a partner. It is significant that few attending lived with a partner only even though only 18% were aged under 50 years.

Location

A question about location in relation to bush land was included for Meet Your Street and Heads Up for Fire but not for More Than a Fire Plan. People were fairly evenly distributed across the areas with about half living close to bush land and one third two or more streets away.

Table 5: Location

	Back onto bush	Across the street	Next street	2 or more streets away
Meet Your Street	33	16	13	33
Heads Up For Fire	27	25	17	30

Met new people

Those surveyed for Meet Your Street were asked if they had met new people at the event. Overall 35% said they had met new people, 27% said they had not met new people and 37% had not responded to the question.

Table 6: Met new people

	% Yes	% No	% No response
Round 1	45	20	35
Round 2	31	31	38
Round 3	22	18	60
MOCS	35	35	30
Average	33	26	41

In the Heads Up for Fire survey a question was included on what people's plans were. Forty one per cent indicated their plan was to leave early, 27% planned to stay and defend and 27% were undecided. This would be a good question to include in future surveys.

Table 7: Plans

<i>Leave early</i>		<i>Stay and defend</i>		<i>Undecided</i>	
n	%	n	%	n	%
64	41	43	27	42	27

Extra help in an emergency

The survey for Meet Your Street included the question; 'Are you likely to require extra help in case of an emergency?' In Round 2 34% said 'yes' to this question, and in Round 3 25% said 'yes'. In the MOCS events the question included four options:

The questions asked whether people would need help and who would provide it:

- I wouldn't need help, I could evacuate myself and my family
- I would need help and people living in my home with me would help me
- I would need help and I have someone not living with me who would help me
- I would need help and I don't know who would help me

The majority, 82% said they did not need additional help, 11% said they would be helped by people living with them, 7% said they would be assisted by someone not living with them and no one said they would need help but did not know who would provide it.

The question could be useful to identify people who have no help available.

Conclusions

Meet Your Street events were clearly the ones that families and people aged under 50 years were more likely to attend. Women were two thirds of attendees for both Meet Your Street and More Than a Fire Plan events. The influence women have within households on bushfire and emergency preparations is unknown.

Meet Your Street events have several important characteristics to note. Firstly they are held in local parks in different villages in the mountains. This is important as it indicates greater preparedness to attend such an event if it is conveniently located. Secondly the events catered for children and this is clearly important for families.

Thirdly the survey acted as a conversation tool enabling people to start talking and thinking about their plans more specifically if they had not already done so. Fourthly it brings together community development workers from community organisations and Rural Fire Service volunteers and resources to work together in engaging with people in the community. Fourthly people needed to feel they were not being judged for their level of preparedness so that they could freely talk about it.

The ideal number of workers required to enable the success of the Meet Your Street events was four, not including childcare. Workers were responsible for the barbecue, cooking the food and handing it out, welcoming and engaging with people and conducting surveys.

Childcare was provided at each Meet Your Street event by one MOCS worker attending with the MOCS bus containing children's activities and toys.

RFS brigades attended all Meet Your Street events with fire trucks and talked to people, conducted activities for children and showed them the trucks and equipment as well as distributing fire plans.

Much has been learned through the process. Communications between organisations – RFS and NCs – need to be improved both ways and have improved as events became more established.

Being non judgemental was an important element of the Meet Your Street events as people were reticent to say what preparations they had in place at first, being concerned about how they would be judged.

More Than a Fire Plan is more informative as a workshop/seminar on creating plans and could follow on from Meet Your Street where people start to think about preparations. At More Than a Fire Plan they could get more detailed information to make further progress on preparations and plans.

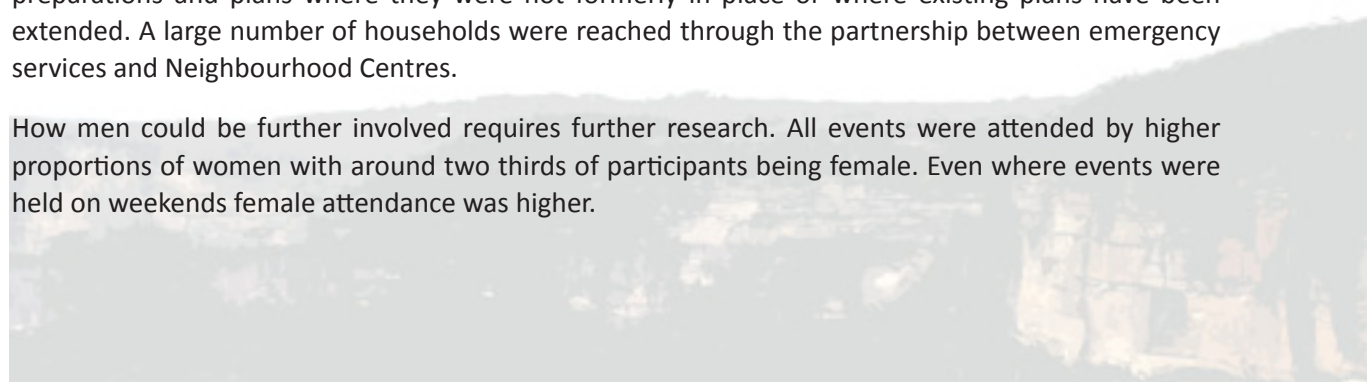
A higher proportion of those attending More Than a Fire Plan had had conversations within their street (54% compared to 40%), with neighbours and others outside their area (76% compared to 60 and 50%) since the workshop. This could reflect the age group of those attending More Than a Fire Plan who tended to be over 50 years and more likely to be home more often without responsibility for children.

Heads Up for Fire could follow on from either Meet Your Street or More Than a Fire Plan where there was interest on the part of residents to be street facilitators. The question can be included on the survey form and where there is interest from a few a workshop could be held on being a HUFF facilitator. This would need to be negotiated with RFS as to their role in such a program and where Neighbourhood Centres could sustainably be involved.

People were also asked on the first two rounds of Meet Your Street if they were prepared to be a contact person for the street. In Round 1 20 said 'yes' and in Round 2 13 said 'yes'. People who nominated were from all age groups except over 85 years. People nominating to be street facilitators could be a basis for starting a HUFF program in the area.

Overall, further follow up is required to know how successful each program is in bringing about preparations and plans where they were not formerly in place or where existing plans have been extended. A large number of households were reached through the partnership between emergency services and Neighbourhood Centres.

How men could be further involved requires further research. All events were attended by higher proportions of women with around two thirds of participants being female. Even where events were held on weekends female attendance was higher.



Meet Your Street Data Analysis 2015

There were a total of 21 events including four arranged by Mountains Outreach Community Service. The remainder were organized by Mid Mountains Neighbourhood Centre with two events held in most locations between 2014 and 2015. Locations were Katoomba, Wentworth Falls, Lawson, Woodford, Hazelbrook and Bullaburra. Each event was held in a local park, banners were placed in the area and flyers dropped in letterboxes in local streets notifying people of the event. A total of 280 adults provided information through the survey.

The first round was held in October/November 2014 with five events and second round was March/April 2015 with six events. A third round was held in September/October 2015 with six events. In addition four Meet Your Street events were held through Mountains Outreach Community Service (MOCS) in September/October 2015 at Katoomba, Wentworth Falls, Lawson and Hazelbrook with 82 completing surveys.

Most people knew about the event through flyers delivered into their letterboxes, banners placed in the streets, word of mouth and because they were passing by or already at the park and decided to join in. The local location and providing food were clearly an important in order to to engage people.

A BBQ of sausage sandwiches was provided and child care was available. Community development workers approached people and asked them if they would complete a survey. The questions prompted discussion about the issues relating to preparedness and responses to the 2013 fires.

The ideal number of workers required to enable the success of the events was four, not including childcare. Workers were responsible for the barbecue, cooking the food and handing it out, welcoming and engaging with people and conducting surveys.

The surveys were necessary to get people thinking about their situation and the preparations they had engaged in and needed to address. It was apparent that this provided an impetus for discussions with others in the area as well as with attending RFS officers and community workers.

Childcare was provided at each event by one MOCS worker attending with the MOCS bus containing children's activities and toys.

RFS brigades attended all events with fire trucks and talked to people, conducted activities for children and showed them the trucks and equipment as well as fire plans.

Much has been learned through the process. Communications between organisations – RFS and NCs – need to be improved both ways and have improved as events became more established.

Being non-judgemental was an important element of the events as people were reticent to say what preparations they had in place at first, being concerned about how they would be judged. Community workers were keen to provide reassurance that there was a lot to think about and this was an opportunity to think about preparations – that an honest answer was the most helpful answer, using humour, ease, mentioning their own situation and referring to the flat tyre situation where you rarely get a flat tyre but you carry a spare in case.

People were told that the data gathering was part of bigger process so that there would be a base line for preparation levels.

Table 1: Location of events	n Events	Locations
Round 1 October/November 2014	5	Katoomba, Lawson, Woodford, Hazelbrook and Bullaburra
Round 2 March/April 2015	6	Katoomba, Wentworth Falls, Lawson, Woodford, Hazelbrook and Bullaburra
Round 3 September/October 2015	6	Wentworth Falls, Medlow Bath, Leura Market, Lawson, Hazelbrook and Bullaburra
MOCS September/October 2015	4	North Katoomba, Lawson, Hazelbrook, and Wentworth Falls

Notification of event

The most common form of notification was through flyers deposited in letterboxes followed by word of mouth and passing by or being in the park at the time. These all indicate local methods were most effective. Workers from the Neighbourhood Centre dropped flyers in letterboxes and placed banners in each area before the event was due to occur. Banners or posters were noted by 6 % overall.

Table 2: Notification

Found out about event	1st round %	2nd round %	3rd round %	Average
Gazette	2	0	4	2
Echo	0	0	0	0
Mid Mountains News	3	4	1	3
Flyer	41	33	17	30
Posters/banner	13	5	0	6
Email	6	1	3	3
Website	1	0	0	0
Word of mouth	11	21	12	15
Facebook	4	7	2	4
Social media	0	5	4	3
Passing by/at park	4	19	13	12
NC/MOCS/RFS	7	2	5	5
Other	4	3	6	4
Missing	4	0	33	12

In Round 1 three happened to be in the area, one heard about it from Lawson school, one from palliative care and two from a newsletter. In Round 2 other ways people heard about the events included through the RFS or fire brigade, one from the Neighbourhood Centre and another from Hazelbrook Happenings. In Round 3 other ways people were informed included Bush recovery newsletter, Hazelbrook School, Red Cross, RFS, Rotary, Volunteer and working here.

Gender

Consistently there were one third male and two thirds female attending who completed surveys. Workers thought this was representative of those attending overall and not due to women completing surveys.

Table 3: Gender for each round

	Round 1		Round 2		Round 3		MOCS	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Lawson	6	17	0	9	2	6	7	13
Woodford	10	14	5	12				
Hazelbrook	9	16	4	14	6	19	6	16
Bullaburra	3	4	5	6	3	7		
Katoomba	6	16	5	9			9	18
Wentworth Falls			2	5	4	6	2	9
Medlow Bath					6	9		
Leura					13	18		
Total	34	67	21	55	34	65	24	56
%	33	64	28	72	34	65	29	68

Table 4: Gender overall by location

Meet Your Street Event Locations	Male	Female
Lawson	15	45
Woodford	15	26
Hazelbrook	25	65
Bullaburra	11	17
Katoomba	20	43
Wentworth Falls	8	20
Medlow Bath	6	9
Leura	13	18
Total	113	243
%	32	68

Age

Just over half of attendees across all events were aged below 50 years and half above 50 years. Only 20 % were above 60 years of age.

Table 5: Age groups for each round.

	<34	35-49	50-59	60-69	70-84
Round 1	12	32	37	15	6
Round 2	10	16	31	12	5
Round 3	24	32	21	19	3
MOCS	16	38	19	6	3
Total	62	118	108	52	17
%	17	33	30	15	5

Living circumstances

Fifty two % of attendees had children they lived with as single parents or with a partner. The highest proportion were those with partner and children followed by those who lived with a partner. Eleven % lived alone.

Table 6: Living circumstances for each round

	Partner	Partner and Children	Single parent	Parents	Others	Alone
Round 1	26	32	15	5	19	18
Round 2	10	16	31	12	5	2
Round 3	37	27	15	4	1	14
MOCS	17	47	9	0	5	7
Total	90	122	70	21	30	41
%	24	33	19	6	8	11

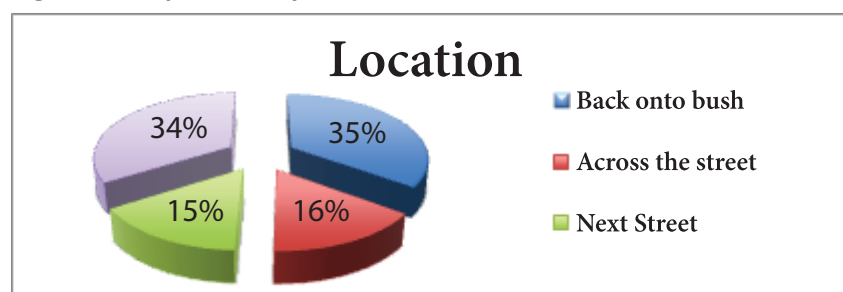
Location to bush land

Five % did not respond to the question. Of those who did a total of 49 % lived close to bush land and 46 % lived further away. The distribution of attendees was even in terms of proximity to bush land.

Table 7: Location

	Back onto bush	Across the street	Next street	2 or more streets away
Round 1	36	21	1	41
Round 2	30	12	13	20
Round 3	34	15	15	33
MOCS	23	13	18	28
Total n	123	61	47	122
%	33	16	13	33

As can be seen in Figure 1 the highest proportions of attendees were those who lived on the bush and those who lived two or more streets away. Figure indicates that this proportion was consistent across event rounds.

Figure 1: Proportions by location to bush land

Higher numbers of people appear to come from locations backing on to bush or 2 or more streets away.

Preparations

There was consistency across the events in the preparations that most had in place. An average of 78 % said they had talked about what to do in an emergency though only 67 % said they had an emergency plan. On average 63 % said they had prepared their house and grounds and 64 % had the contact details of their neighbours. Most were least likely to have practised their emergency plan or created an emergency kit. The low rate for having contact details of neighbours in the MOCS events is notable and largely due to a high not applicable response rate of 48% to this question in Katoomba.

Table 8: Preparations

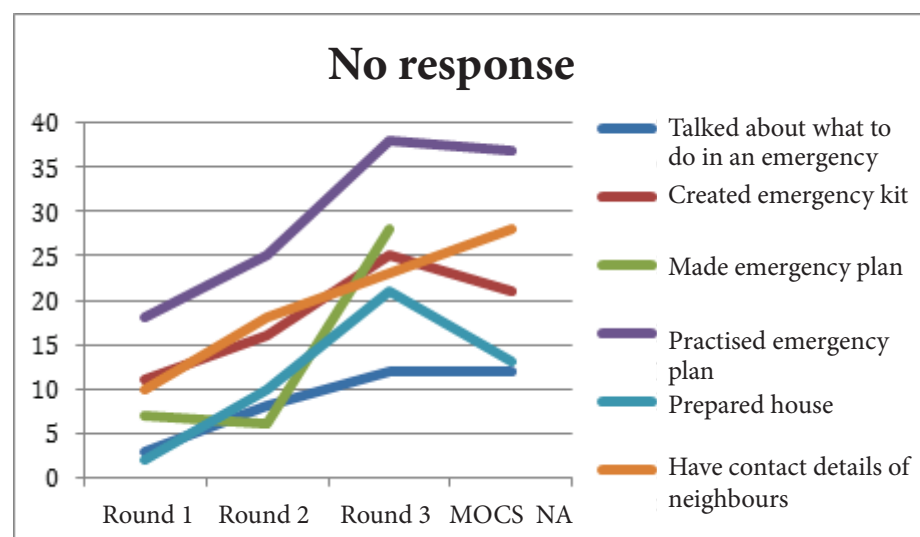
In Place	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	MOCS	Average %
Talked about what to do in an emergency	84	76	76	74	78
Created emergency kit	47	47	46	43	46
Made emergency plan	69	74	58		67
Practised emergency plan	39	39	30	24	33
Prepared house	63	62	70	56	63
Have contact details of neighbours	72	71	67	44	64

Levels of response to questions

When looking at the questions people responded to it was evident that the no response rate increased through the occurrence of the events with the first round having the lowest no response rate and the rate of no response increasing with each round. A sharper rise in no response occurred in Round 3 and decreased in the MOCS events. A sharp increase is noticeable between Rounds 2 and 3 for Made emergency plan.

There was consistency in the level of no response for different questions. 'Practised emergency plan' consistently rated highest in no response and 'talked about an emergency plan' rates lowest for no response. 'Prepared house' showed a sharp increase in no response between rounds 2 and 3 possibly because it was early in the season in September/October 2015 and many would not have got around to that as yet so preferred not to answer. Round 1 had been within the fire season in November/October 2014 and Round 2 after the season in March/April 2015. A similar issue could be in play for 'Made an emergency plan'.

Figure 2: Levels of no response to preparedness questions



Comments

Round 1 – 99 surveys

There were 13 comments about what would be useful to 'help you prepare' with four mentioning assistance with cleaning gutters and RFS inspections. Other comments related to notifications and safe places.

On what people liked about the event there were 60 comments. Eleven commented on the food with four mentioning the smell of the food being good and eight regarding the atmosphere as friendly, four as relaxed and four as social. 'People' was mentioned eleven times, nine commented on meeting people and 'people coming together', seven used the term 'community', two 'chatting' and two 'neighbourly' or 'neighbourhood'. Five made reference to the activities and four to the location or venue. Information was mentioned by three.

Eighteen comments about what could have been better included six about notifying people about the event, four about getting more people to come along and two suggested having wine or beer and two music. Two made food suggestions of salad and tofu, two said 'nothing' and three suggested activities for older kids such as tug of war.

Round 2 – 77 surveys

There were 15 comments on other preparations. Two referred to apps and messages, two to having documents backed up and another to 'the things you care for' being safe. Two said they were confident and well prepared and felt safe and another had given their in-laws details of their emergency plan. One mentioned having a 'template of a plan to get things solid' and another having a 'place to go'. There was one mention of animals and housing for them, one about 'being up to date with info and being aware of what's going on in the neighbourhood'. One referred to having 'gutters replaced and trees cut back', another to having a Fire Forum and another to 'not about being stuck on top'.

On what would be useful in helping to prepare 24 made comments.

Two referred to pets and knowing where to go with them and making 'an early decision either way,

register at 'Last Resort Place' or 'Neighbourhood Centre'. Text messages, social media and the Fires near Me app were mentioned by two and information by two. Community awareness was referred to by two and 'knowing how long it would take to evacuate and keeping up to date with what's happening' by one. One commented on 'fires making hydrant visible', one 'identify a place to go if you evacuate' and another 'reading bushfire book, clearing gutters'. 'Mowing behind house to help keep clear' was mentioned by one and another said 'happy'.

Six commented on needing help with 'being able to afford tree maintenance, physical issues around getting on roof', help to plug down pipes and services for the elderly. Council management of vacant and clearing vacant blocks was mentioned by two. There was mention of an open day by one and another said 'MYS but needs more promotion- is good information'. One final comment was as follows:

Knowing what is happening day by day, hour by hour. List who has medical issues in the area?
Where is a register kept for people going? Do the police have this information?

When asked what people liked about the event 42 responded to the question. Four mentioned that it was free, nine mentioned community and meeting others, five said it was friendly, welcoming and two said it was a good, relaxed atmosphere. Three referred to meeting people and making connections and there were 14 references to the food - two wanted tofu, others liked the kids getting fed, not having to cook, the nice smells. Three said it was a good idea, another that it was fun and two referred to information. The fire trucks were mentioned by two.

In all people liked the friendly atmosphere the food and the people created and the openness of the event.

For what could have been better there were 25 responses. Six said all was fine or 'really good', three referred to the weather waning sunshine, five made reference to the food wanting coffee and tea, cheese and buttered bread, more sausages and 'onions ready'. Six made comments relating to promotion – more signage, advertising through schools and five others wanted more activities, more people and more organisations attending.

Round 3 – 99 surveys

What would be useful to help you prepare

Two said 'nothing', seven mentioned information including in the media and early notification, two mentioned 'Bush Fire Forum', two wanted 'more people aware of emergency meeting points' and



'knowing where to go' and one referred to 'Public Awareness, Newspaper, Neighbourhood Talks'. Three mentioned RFS and AIDER program, one 'knowing when local burn offs occur' and one referred to a 'written plan'. Two commented on tanks, gutters and hoses, two mentioned access and 'exit signage' and one said 'emergency', another HUFF, another 'experience' and another 'make sure phone is on'.

MOCS Events – 82 surveys

In Wentworth Falls seven of eleven respondents made comments, 14 of 22 in Hazelbrook, 17 of 21 in Lawson and 13 of 28 in Katoomba.

There were 13 mentions of gaining information, six each of community connection and kids activities and ten of talking with people including RFS and others, seeing people and meeting new people. The inclusion of activities for kids was a big draw for people and introducing them to the RFS and their vehicles was important:

Getting kids used to fire trucks.

Kids talking to fire brigade members.

Having the connection with neighbours and opportunity to talk about an event such as a bush fire was also important:

Feel I could get help from neighbours and offer help.

Being able to discuss with other residents.

There were four mentions of trees – removal and help with cutting trees down and the AIDER program. Learning about road closure information and escape routes was mentioned by three. Improved awareness and opportunity for thinking were mentioned by two. Also mentioned by at least two were what to pack, thinking about animals, the food and the timing reminding them of the issues.



More Than a Fire Plan

More Than a Fire Plan is a program originally developed in the lower Blue Mountains to address concerns of people as a result of the 2013 fires in which over 200 homes were destroyed. The process of its development is described by Peta Williams, Manager, Lower Mountains Neighbourhood Centre (LMNC).

There was evident anxiety and palpable fear in the community in various parts of the Blue Mountains after 2013 fires including those not directly impacted by fire. In social support services that were held at the Neighbourhood Centre people were talking about anxiety and fear after the fires. Peta Williams as Manager of Lower Mountains Neighbourhood Centre and Alan Henderson, a counselor with Wesley Counselling Services doing outreach at LMNC, talked about doing something to support the lower mountains community. There were many recovery events and programs occurring at the time across the mountains. The plan was to focus on emotional preparedness as there was a lot happening on practical preparations. Red Cross had material on emotional preparedness but Peta and Alan did not know that at the time.

It was decided to run a pilot forum in December 2013 with or without emergency services given the demands on their time. In the end Danny Croucher – Red Cross, Sally McKay from MPES recovery centre, and Dave Metcalfe from RFS community liaison lower mountains were able to attend.

Peta Williams talked about her own feelings, anxiety and sick feeling when hearing a siren as a strategy to encourage people to share their own feelings or acknowledge that it was understandable to have these feelings. Alan talked about physical and emotional responses to fear and anxiety, how feelings and emotions arise, including the fight/flight response, and how to best prepare emotionally. People were really able to engage with this. The importance of animals came up but was not able to be dealt with very well at the time.

Part of the purpose of the event was to gather information and stories from each other so experiences could be shared and people would be aware that they were not alone in how they were feeling. The event was felt to be successful in this aim.

Subsequently forums were rolled out in 2014 across the Blue Mountains with NRMA funding, through the Household Preparedness Working Group chaired by Peta Williams. A more structured two hour seminar with presentations from all the emergency services so people could understand what each one did was offered. RFS were able to provide a professional presentation from the Engagement Officer and Red Cross presented on emotional preparedness.

Four seminars were run across the mountains with about 25 attending each.

Reassurance and understanding were provided about how people might respond emotionally and how emotional reactions might affect physical response. The idea being that this would provide motivation to make better preparations ahead of any event. A small group activity was included that was well received as it allowed interaction between participants.

The program was conceived as a benefit to the community by providing encouragement for people to take action about preparing a fire plan and understanding how they are likely to respond and will handle an event next time.

The Neighbourhood Centre (NC) role in preparation of the program was important in terms of the way NCs can connect with the community and have now developed connections with emergency services. There are now people NC managers can call on and great ways for them to connect with community that may not have been there before. A strong connection with emergency services has emerged from the process that is intended to be ongoing. The Red Cross connection is now unclear as the Recovery Project Officer- Blue Mountains position ends but the RFS connection can be ongoing. A vehicle for

community sector and emergency services to meet needs to be maintained however and NCs need to be seen as relevant organisations in disaster.

Additional note: Recovery needs to take into account the effects on people in other areas not directly affected by the fires.



More Than a Fire Plan Data Analysis

Introduction and Summary

Workshops were held in Blaxland, Katoomba, Lawson and Springwood in 2014 through the Neighbourhood Centres. There were four in total.

The workshops were attended by 126 people, two thirds were women and the largest age group was the 60-69 year age group with 33% followed by the 50-59 year age group with 29%. Two people identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Island. Most (74%) lived in households of more than two people and 25% lived alone. Seventy % drove to the workshop, 18% were driven and 10% walked.

Just over 80 % had talked about a fire plan but only 52% said they had a prepared plan. Thirty six % said they had made an emergency kit while 49% said they had not, 46% had made contact with neighbours and 39% said they had not.

Forty four per cent found out about the workshop through the Gazette, 21% through word of mouth 24% through a promotional flyer and 21% through the web and/or Facebook. Some indicated more than one source.

There was strong agreement that 'I have a greater understanding of how emergencies could affect me and my property' with 90% strongly agreeing or agreeing with the statement. Two per cent disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement and 4% were neutral. Sixty one per cent strongly agreed and 33% agreed with the statement 'I am committed to undertaking some actions to increase my preparedness for emergencies'. Less than 1% strongly disagreed and less than 1% were neutral.

On the statement 'I know where my legal, medical and financial documents are' 44% strongly agreed and 44% agreed, 6% were neutral and less than 2% either disagreed or strongly disagreed. The statement 'I have identified other irreplaceable items and know where they are' was strongly agreed to by 30%, 44% agreed and 18% were neutral. Three per cent disagreed. On a commitment to discuss a an emergency plan in the household 50% strongly agreed, 36% agreed and 4% were neutral with 2% disagreeing. Five per cent did not respond to the question.

Attending an open day was strongly agreed to by 18%, agreed to by 25%, 31% were neutral, 10% disagreed, 3% strongly disagreed and 11% did not respond to the question. Only 48% were committed to downloading the fire related apps. Downloading the three apps was strongly agreed to by 27%, agreed to by 21%, 11% were neutral, 9% disagreed, 3% strongly disagreed and 15% did not respond to the question. Many may not have smart phones to download the apps to.

Talking to people in the neighbourhood who may need assistance in an emergency was strongly agreed to by 31%, agreed to by 49%, with 6% neutral, 3% disagreeing and 8% not responding to the question. Tables below indicate totals and percentages in more detail.

Other preparations mentioned included two saying they had organised somewhere to go if evacuated and five talked about having documents and other things ready to take including pets. One had a written fireplan and two mentioned being in a CFU or RFS. A few said they had water supplies, one smoke alarms, one protective clothing and another clearing underscrub.

On the question of why people attended the forum there were 88 responses with 20 making references to preparation or being prepared, 16 referring to information and four referring to a plan. Three were new to the mountains, and six commented on concern about the 2013 fires saying they were anxious and ill prepared for them. Thirteen commented on accessing specialist knowledge to complement what they already knew.

The most useful part of the forum was commented on by 88 and the strongest response from 16 was

that all of it was useful. Eleven specifically mentioned the RFS and many referred to the value of the distinction between leaving early and leaving in a hurry. Six stated that they appreciated having the different organisations together and having experts from RFS and Red Cross speaking, learning about emotional preparedness was commented on by seven and six felt the question and discussion time was the most valuable part. Seven referred to increased awareness about the importance of having a plan and five mentioned information in handouts. Practical advice such as packing medication and preparing ahead of time was appreciated and mentioned by four.

Overall there was much that was well received:

Emotionally prepared, detailed talk re prep, meeting all emergency service people and neighbours, insurance suggestion

On the question of what could be improved there were 59 responses. Four said they did not know what could improve it and four just wanted it continued. Two suggestions related to local knowledge, five commented on other organisations that could have been present, specifically National Parks, BMCC and Fire and Rescue, two commented on the printing of materials.

Suggestions were made with regard to getting information about the event to more people. A range of other comments were offered as well as many positive comments. Please see below for further detail.



More Than a Fire Plan Data Analysis Tables

Gender

Table 1: Gender

	Male	Female
Katoomba	12	27
Lawson	12	20
Springwood	8	23
Blaxland	11	13
Total	43	83
%	34	66

Age groups

Table 2: Age groups

	<34	35-49	50-59	60-69	70-84	85+
Katoomba	3	7	13	14	2	0
Lawson	0	3	7	11	11	0
Springwood	4	5	8	8	5	1
Blaxland	1	0	8	9	6	0
Total	8	15	36	42	24	1
%	6.3	11.9	28.6	33.3	19.0	0.8

Number in household

Almost 25% lived alone and 74% lived with two or more others.

Table 3: Number in household

	1	2	2+
Katoomba	2	0	37
Lawson	13	0	19
Springwood	7	2	22
Blaxland	9	0	15
Total	31	2	93
%	24.6	1.6	73.8

Means of travel to event

Most drove themselves to the event though almost 20% were driven and 10% walked to the event.

Table 4: Travel to event

	Drove self	Driven	Walked	Train
Katoomba	29	7	3	0
Lawson	23	3	4	2
Springwood	21	8	3	0
Blaxland	16	5	3	0
Total	89	23	13	2
%	70.6	18.3	10.3	1.6

Levels of preparation

Over 80% said they had talked about an emergency plan while just over 50% said they had prepared a plan and 46% had contact details of neighbours. Less than 40% had prepared an emergency kit.

Table 5: Preparation

	Y	N	No response
Talked about	81	12.7	6.3
Made kit	36.5	49.2	14.3
Prepared plan	52.4	34.1	13.5
Neighbour contact	46	38.9	15.1

Other Preparations

Other preparations mentioned included:

- Have place to go when evacuated. Have contact persons outside the area to alert them of what is happening
- Contacted family for overnight accommodation
- Photos of emergency papers - passports eg and rooms photographed
- Discussed evac triggers, discussed transport for the pets
- Prepared fire take me box
- Keep packed all valuables in easy roll suitcases
- Pack a case with clothes, take bank/insurance etc in a case, purchase food, batteries, water, have wet towels around door
- Have all current important docs in a (ie. insurance, wills etc) case ready to take if needed. Have a bag packed for each member of the family at the beginning of the fire season (including the cat!) Test our fire pump regularly (we have 2 huge tanks) (petrol)
- CFU, SWS
- Been a volunteer with RFS, consult weather forecasts/RFS website and listed to ABC local radio, mental (not written) plans
- Smoke alarms
- Clear block under scrub
- Written fireplan, prepared boxes of important documents and irreplaceables
- Have suitable protective clothing, have sufficient containers etc for water holding
- None as my husband and I have just moved to the mts from Sydney 3 weeks ago

Where found out about workshop

The highest proportion found out about the workshop through the Gazette, followed by a flyer and word of mouth.

Table 6: Notification

Found out about event	Katoomba	Lawson	Springwood	Blaxland	Total	%
Gazette	25	15	10	5	55	44
BMCC	2	1	1	0	4	3
Flyer	4	9	7	10	30	24
Red Cross outreach visit	1	0	0	1	2	2
Word of mouth	6	9	5	7	27	21
Other web or Facebook	1	2	5	2	10	8
RFS/Red Cross drop in	0	1	5	4	10	8
NC/MOCS	2	5	3	9	19	15
NC web or facebook	11	1	2	2	16	13

Workshop outcomes

There was strong agreement that 'I have a greater understanding of how emergencies could affect me and my property' with 90% strongly agreeing or agreeing with the statement. Two per cent disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement and 4% were neutral. Sixty one per cent strongly agreed and 33% agreed with the statement 'I am committed to undertaking some actions to increase my preparedness for emergencies'. Less than 1% strongly disagreed and less than 1% were neutral.

Table 7: Workshop outcomes

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	No response
I have a greater understanding of how emergencies could affect me and my property	45.2	44.4	4.0	0.8	1.6	4.0
I am committed to undertaking some actions to increase my preparedness for emergencies	61.1	33.3	0.8	0.0	0.8	4.0
I know where my legal, medical and financial documents are	44.4	44.4	6.3	0.8	0.8	3.2
I have identified other irreplaceable items and know where they are	30.2	44.4	18.3	3.2	0.0	4.0
Our household will discuss our emergency plan	50.0	36.5	4.0	2.4	0.0	7.1
I will attend an open day on the 13th	18.3	25.4	31.7	10.3	3.2	11.1
I will download the 3 apps to my smart phone	27.0	21.4	11.1	8.7	12.7	19.0
I will talk to people I know in my neighbourhood who may need assistance in an emergency	31.7	49.2	6.3	3.2	0.0	9.5

Reasons for attending

Why did you attend the forum?

Of the 88 responses to the question on reasons for attending the forum there were 20 references referring to preparation or being prepared which included:

- To find out more about preparations
- For greater awareness and preparedness
- Learn procedures and preparation might save lives
- To obtain information about how to prepare for bush fire emergencies
- To be prepared for the coming season. Anxiety within the community seems high.
- To increase awareness of fire plans and being prepared

There were 16 references to information including:

- Get more information about fire
- The more information you have the better prepared you are

Gain information to enable me to make better decisions around preparedness and/or in the event of evacuation, better planning
Wanted to get as much information as possible to ensure we are prepared for the bushfire season

A few were new to the mountains:

New to the area never been in bushfire area before
To be informed about what to do in a bushfire emergency as i have always lived in the city
To prepare for the coming season as we are new residents (march 2014).

A plan was mentioned by four:

I realised last October that I didn't have a plan and hadn't discussed what we would do - so came here to find out what is the best way to plan
For more information on creating a fire plan. I needed a good kick
For more info on what to take into account in a fire plan

Being aware was key for some:

To be aware of important issues during a fire that i may not be aware of
To learn and be aware of what is required to be safe when threatened by fire
To be aware of the precautions to be taken in the event of a bushfire
Improve my awareness

Specialist knowledge was sought by many who felt they had some previous knowledge:

Listen to correct methods and services
Interested in what would be said, after something like this hasn't been done for many years to my knowledge
Interested to know of updated organisational and technological information. Love the comment from RFS: "if risk is too great - leave"
We live in a fire prone area - we'd be mad not to take advantage of fire advice from those that know best! You can always learn something new
To get an update of procedures
To learn more and understand the possible problems in a fire situation
Learn more about RFS provisions
Always good to keep up to date with information and be reminded about dangers and receive tips
More ideas of how to prepare
To learn more and understand the possible problems in a fire situation
Wanted personally delivered overview by police, RFS, SES rather than just tick the box from pamphlets
For the overview info

Two were concerned about emergencies in general:

To learn what to do in an emergency and hopefully save my life
Preparation in case of emergency

There were some comments in response to previous fires and being near the bush:

Felt anxious and ill prepared for last years fire.
Surprised by how I lost it in last years fire.
Very concerned about the impact of October 2013 on our lovely blue mountains
Because I still hadn't gotten around to putting together a fire plan since last October.
As a result of last year's fires and how stressful it was I realised needed more help.
Concern, backing onto bush.
Bushfire preparedness.

Being prepared emotionally was important for one:

To find out more about emotional preparedness

Further providing information was important:

- To increase preparedness and report to BM Firewatch on Facebook

Understanding was mentioned by four:

- To increase understanding of situation

Safety was mentioned by two:

- Out of interest to feel safer

- For my safety

To learn, to educate were other key terms:

- To learn what we could do to be best prepared

- To educate myself

For others - One participant was there for an elderly mother:

- To bring my elderly mother - but she was sick so I attended to take info back to her

Other comments included:

- Rob Manns mapping

- My BAL is flamezone

- Community involvement

Most useful part of the forum

What do you think was the most useful part of the forum?

There were 88 responses to the question as to what was most useful about the forum. Sixteen commented that all of the forum was helpful and eleven made comments about preparedness or preparing:

- All of it especially the RFS talk and resources

- Professional input + handouts + group discussions/questions

- The need to be prepared in the event of an emergency

- Prepare your house

- Reassurance of my knowledge and preparedness

- I live in a bushfire area and want to be prepared

Eleven references explicitly related to the RFS:

- Information from RFS but all sessions were very helpful.

- Q and A at the end, treat to have SES and fire brigade present! Thank you

Special mention was made of the distinction between leave early and leaving in a hurry:

- RFS breakdown of difference between leave early and leave in a hurry plan.

- Different types of plans ie leave early/leave in a hurry etc

- Discussion about how to plan and needing 2 plans: 1 for leaving early and 1 for leaving in a hurry

- Preparedness for emergency "leave now"

- RFS being prepared plans leave early and in a hurry plans

- To have plan for early departure and leave in a hurry plan or last resort strategy.

- Break down of how to have several plans dependent on different circumstances and triggers

The speakers and having the different organisations together were appreciated:

- Red Cross speaker was very good. Speakers at the end of the forum and QandA. Like having multiple agencies together to provide various input THANKS TO KNC

- Clear speakers on relevant topics

- Speakers fluent and authorities in own area

- Hearing from RFS and Red Cross

- Different agencies together

- Greater understanding of different services roles'



Seven references were made to emotional preparedness:

- Facing the effects of stress on my decision making
- The mental and emotional preparedness session
- Fireplan - how to and emotional preparedness
- The emotional intro. at the beginning

Seven references to a plan:

- To increase awareness and to prompt what to consider to create our plan.
- Learning how important it is to be prepared and to have a plan
- Discussion of various plans

There were five references to information in the handouts.

Practical advice was appreciated:

- Practical advice on location specific information
- Being prepared and practical will lessen panic and stress
- What to pack eg medication
- Preparing ahead of time and explaining the reasons why this is so important

The question session at the end was valuable for many and mentioned in nine comments:

- Thorough question time
- QandA at end was really helpful.
- Discussions when questions were asked
- Talking to other people from my town about hazards
- Q and A for the community
- For people to have questions answered by professions

Other comments related to:

- Knowing what facilities might be available and their limitations
- It was disappointing 2 agencies were not represented.

The map exercise was mentioned by two.

Overall there was much that was well received:

- Emotionally prepared, detailed talk re prep, meeting all emergency service people and neighbours, insurance suggestion

Improvements suggested

What can we do in the future to improve the emergency preparedness forums?

There were 59 responses to the question

Four said they did not know what could improve it and four just wanted it continued.

Two suggestions related to local knowledge were put forward:

- If numbers are enough, have tables even more specific eg E.BI and W.BI; North Kat, S Kat etc
- Localise to neighbourhoods

A number of people commented on other organisations that could have been present:

- Invite parks staff
- It would be extremely helpful to insist on a member of the Blue Mountains council
- Make sure groups that were advertised to attend turn up. NSW Fire and Rescue and the BMCC did not turn up!
- Local council input/rfp
- Encourage Fire and Rescue and council to attend. We need these forums annually about august

Suggestions were made about getting information about the event to more people:

- More info in papers and radio (local)

Just keep offering them - promote them in a more exciting manner
I think the design is fine. Just spread word so more people attend
Online posting of forum if unable to attend
More emotional info as well. Also general basic knowledge of what fires do and how they behave
Regular updates
Maintain awareness esp. Local newspapers
Powerpoint graphics/images be included to assist focus on matter
Perhaps a better mike
More specific advice on preparing a home. Maybe run through a sample bushfire plan
Continue to verbally provide updated info. ie what used to happen, what is better action now

The range of ideas offered included:

Maybe an extra 1/2 hour for questions
An intro at the beginning which says what we're going to learn
Start earlier for an earlier finish
I found speakers a bit long winded and vague, I would have preferred more specific practical advice- but i guess that will be in the handouts
Stay and go - needs to be discussed
Somehow connect to younger members of the community
Some little cakes!
A discussion on what to do when there is no time to evacuate
The emphasis on an emergency plan and emergency kit
More time for questions, go through the bfs plan to get familiar
Some of the q's at the end weren't really on the subject
Winmalee people that lost houses...didn't see any
2 1/2 hours not 3
Not sure but wonder why more of our friends didn't think it was important to come
Less time on first two items (although good) and give parameters around the questions people can ask. Many could/should not be answered in this forum
Ditch the people/connections circles exercise. None of our group could see the point

Two were concerned about the printing of materials:

Paperwork like this should be printed double-sided
Please use double-sided printing to reduce copying

There were many positive comments:

Very informative - can't fault it
Really well run
Keep these forums going very good
Screen for the projector was really good
Continue to provide. Thank you to all speakers and services who attended today
Did a great job cannot think of anything
Interactive workshops like this are very good continue doing these locally
Excellent, MC was excellent



Heads Up For Fire 2015

Introduction and Summary

The report gives an account of the Heads Up for Fire program roll out in Blackheath, New South Wales in 2015. *Heads Up For Fire* is a street based initiative developed by Blackheath Area Neighbourhood Centre and volunteers from the Blackheath Rural Fire Service (RFS) encouraging neighbourhood networking and support to prepare for emergencies.

Blackheath and the Blue Mountains western townships were recorded in the 2011 census as having a population of 5781. Blackheath township had a population of 4458 (3566 adults as 20% are under 18 years of age and 2044 households) with 45% over the age of 50 years.

In total 78 facilitators have joined the HUFF program in 2015. Twenty six hub meetings have been held on weekends after initial letter box drop and door knocks by facilitators in their areas reaching over 500 people in the Blackheath area amounting to over 14% of the population and possibly one quarter of households. As one quarter of properties in the area are vacant dwellings this is a considerable reach.

It appears that connections are being made within the streets where facilitators have introduced themselves and already existing connections recognised. It was noted that the information facilitators were distributing to people was useful and people were pleased that 'something was happening'.

A survey was prepared to gather information similar to that being obtained in other programs being run in the Blue Mountains to determine who is most likely to respond to the program and people's level of preparedness. The survey was completed by those attending hub meetings and by facilitators at the last three workshops (the survey was not available for earlier workshops). In total 157 surveys were completed, entered onto a spreadsheet and analysed using excel.

Analysis indicated that involvement in the HUFF program has attracted almost equal numbers of males and females with 47% male and 53% female survey completions. Of those who completed the surveys the majority were aged between 50 and 84 years of age with 5.5% under 50 years and 4.4% 85 years and over. Sixty% lived with a partner and 28 % lived alone. Around 10% lived with children.

Seventy per cent had talked about what to do in an emergency and 61% had the contact details of neighbours while 56% said they had made an emergency plan and prepared their house. Only 30% said they had practiced an emergency plan and 34% that they had an emergency kit.

A quarter of those who made comments mentioned accessing information and the value of working with their local community and neighbours. Comments related to developing awareness and knowledge, learning, getting advice in order to be prepared for emergencies, knowing procedures and strategies and understanding the risks.

A meeting was held with the program coordinators, two RFS members and four facilitators in November 2015 to discuss the program roll out in 2015. Facilitators were becoming aware of issues such as the impact of power outages within their areas and the number of people who have electric phones and no mobiles so would not have access to a phone, mothers at home with young children and no car access and the aged and chronically ill in their areas. Some facilitators had found out those households in their areas that had equipment such as generators and could potentially make arrangements with them to assist others if needed.

There was some concern expressed by facilitators at the meeting about their responsibilities and the information they are collecting. Some said that it was a big responsibility and discussion indicated that there it was unclear what the facilitator's responsibilities extend to regarding keeping information and looking out for others.

It is recommended that responsibility of facilitators and responsibility for information they collect is clarified and possibly put into a policy through BANC relating to HUFF facilitators in particular.

It needs to be made clear that HUFF facilitator responsibilities should not extend beyond themselves and making contact within their area. It should be made clear that they can recommend visits by RFS volunteers and access to other services and assist others in developing their plans but are not ultimately responsible for others. Their absence during a fire emergency should not impact on the ability of residents to enact their plans.

The HUFF program is successfully raising awareness of people in local areas, their needs and how these can be addressed in times of emergency. It is enabling and facilitating connections and contact between people on a local street level. People over 50 years of age appear to be the most likely to take up the role of facilitator and to have the time and ability to make contact with people in their areas.

The Blackheath Area Neighbourhood Centre is taking on responsibility for the program now that it is established in the hope that it will be ongoing with minimal involvement from the centre. Ongoing involvement will include a regular newsletter and updates on relevant information and programs relating to emergency and disaster.

Further evidence will need to be gathered to gauge the ongoing success of the program and its sustainability. Perhaps brief reports back from facilitators on a three or six monthly basis would indicate continued involvement and contact with others in the areas. Determining if more people have plans would also be a good indicator. Consistent data gathering is important.

Heads Up For Fire (HUFF)

A history and overview of the HUFF project and simple 10 step system detailing how to implement this program within your community, particularly via organisations such as the Rural Fire Service (RFS), State Emergency Service (SES), Fire and Rescue NSW (FRNSW) and other community service oriented organisations.

History and Overview

The purpose of the Heads Up For Fire Project (HUFF) was created to assist in creating physical and emotional security for people in the Upper Blue Mountains communities of Blackheath and Mt Victoria. HUFF aims to generate genuine connections between residents, the Emergency Services, local community groups and the Neighbourhood Centre. Ideally, we consider that supporting these connections to develop and grow will be beneficial to residents in the event of any emergency, natural disaster or extreme weather.

Local residents, who volunteer to take part in the HUFF program as Neighbourhood Emergency Preparedness Facilitator, put in these ideals into practice. Their role is to:

- Connect with their neighbours within a particular proximity to their place of residency.

**As allocated after discussion with a HUFF program director to take in to account the volunteer's preference of local residences to provide service.*

- Discuss with and assist their neighbours to implement an Emergency Preparedness Plan, particularly in the event of bush fire, storm and tempest or any other natural disaster - through street meetings and/or mutually arranged individual contact that may be supported by a Community Service organisation or emergency services.

**Services may and are not limited to include the RFS, SES, FRNSW or Neighbourhood/Community Centres.*

- Identify vulnerable persons within their assigned locality and provide a 'conduit' support

network to said persons via providing information and/or assisting to provide access to relevant community or emergency services support.

**E.g. To offer a link, to or support communication with RFS Community Engagement, who provide guidance in creating functional fire and emergency plans for individuals and deliver further information to residents on an individual basis and the wider community regarding services they may access to help in the event of any emergency.*

The concept of HUFF came into being after the devastating 2009 Victorian fires. The Blue Mountains is one of the most bush fire prone areas in the world and it became clear that people living within the precincts of the Blue Mountains National Park needed a functional bush fire plan. Members of the Blackheath/Mt Victoria Rural Fire Brigade (RFB) began to speak directly with groups of residents about personal, emotional and physical safety and preparedness in the lead up to and event of bush fire. Under the umbrella of Blackheath Area Neighbourhood Centre (BANC), members of the RFB and local residents formed the Blackheath Bush Fire Watch Group. Within this, the acronym HUFF caught on and the stage was set. Street meetings were held in the most bush fire prone areas of Blackheath and HUFF volunteers were recruited to seek out and connect with their most vulnerable neighbours e.g. people who were not adequately prepared for bush fire, or who lacked connection to internet and timely communication. The idea was to make sure that these people were:

- Kept informed in the event of fire approaching
- Encouraged to make a plan in times of stability and
- Able to act upon it in times of fire emergencies.

Over the next few years Blackheath and Mt Victoria experienced a severe and damaging windstorm, two snowstorms as well as a destructive bush fire. It became evident that it would be beneficial to the community to extend the concept of HUFF to cover all emergency situations. This was challenging to implement given that the project was entirely reliant on voluntary workers and was operating without subsidy. Consequently the project did not reach its full potential at that time.

In late 2014 BANC saw the opportunity to assist the Upper Mountains communities by keeping the HUFF project afloat and successfully applied for a Community Resilience Innovative Program Grant funded by the Ministry for Police and Emergency Services. This funding meant the revitalisation of HUFF and resources were injected into the project to reach all residents of Blackheath and Mt Victoria. The HUFF project still relied on committed volunteers but was supported by a structured and cohesive organisation.

As a community, looking out for one other and developing and maintaining ties with our neighbours supports the fundamental principle that a connected community is resilient in the face of adversity. Further, assisting others to become confident in their ability to cope in extreme situations is key to the fabric of such a community, particularly one that, geographically, is prone to such extreme weather and frequent natural disasters. Accordingly, HUFF's primary objective is to assist our local community to sustain and develop its existing social cohesion and support residents to prepare themselves and each other for any imminent emergency situation.

In 2015 the HUFF project gained momentum. 27 neighbourhood street meetings held across Blackheath and Mt Victoria have been well attended by residents as a result of local advertising and promotion. From those meetings HUFF has approximately 90 volunteers who will undertake the responsibilities of being a Neighbourhood Emergency Preparedness Facilitator. Their role, as previously outlined, is to assist people living in their local area to create a working emergency plan that can be actioned in the event of bush fire, severe weather or any other emergency event.

HUFF Facilitators have attended an Orientation Workshop where they have been briefed about how to engage in their role, with the support of a take-home kit that includes the official HUFF Facilitator

manual and emergency services information. Volunteers received and were given the opportunity to discuss relevant information from local representatives of the Rural Fire Service (RFS), State Emergency Service (SES) and Fire and Rescue NSW (FRNSW). BANC's Cyber_Shed was present to offer assistance to Facilitators in widening their technological communication and information gathering strategies. Additionally, Facilitators completed a Criminal Record Check (CRC), BANC Volunteer application and had their photo taken for identification cards.

Over the next few months these wonderful volunteers began the process of forming connections, building relationship and assisting in emergency planning with their neighbours.

A monthly newsletter, group email and Facebook page keeps volunteers up to date and encourages them to share information about their experience with HUFF. The communication network will be fine-tuned as it continues, with the Blackheath/Mt Victoria RFB offering support along the way.

As a side note:

The enthusiasm and commitment of our existing volunteers is impressive, and we plan to continue recruiting volunteers for areas that are yet to have a Facilitator in place. Word has spread to other areas of the Blue Mountains, with residents of Medlow Bath and Katoomba keen to be a part of the program – we will look at extending the project following an evaluation of what resources we can offer other communities of the Upper Mountains



Heads Up For Fire 2015 Evaluation Meeting

A meeting was held on 25 November 2015 with the researcher to discuss the program. Attending were: 4 facilitators, 2 RFS, 2 HUFF Coordinators

There were seven workshops held with 20 facilitators each. Workshops were completed in September 2015. Becoming a facilitator involves a criminal record check, attending a workshop, and receiving a manual and an outline of the role. ID cards were given to facilitators indicating they were Neighbourhood Centre volunteers. They were also given access to the HUFF logo so that they could make their own flyers if they wanted to. Facilitators then organized their own street meetings.

SES and Fire and Rescue personnel were present at all facilitator meetings and workshops, a visit to the control centre at Katoomba was organized and 48 facilitators attended.

A newsletter is being sent out once a month to facilitators to keep in touch with them and keep them informed. A folder of resources has been established for facilitators to access. Facilitators have also attended More than a Fire Plan workshops offered in the mountains where possible.

Comments from facilitators related to empty dwellings in their areas and rental properties that are not sufficiently maintained. As is indicated in Table 1 there are a number of vacant properties in Blackheath that are holiday homes or rentals. This creates a problem for many streets where there may be a number of houses that are not permanently occupied. Rental properties may also be less cared for with overgrown gardens that could present a threat to other properties.

Table 1: Property types*

Property types	%
Rental properties	18.6
Social housing	1.5
Vacant dwellings	25.5
Home owners	37.4
Mortgage holders	28.4

*Based on 2011 census atlas.id.com.au/bluemountains housing and housing tenure.

Blackheath Area Neighbourhood Centre promoted talks given by RFS on preparing for the fire season in September/October. People asked about their own properties and were given information about what RFS need to access properties. RFS community engagement team consists of about six members who will do property inspections and help inform people about what needs to be done. Blackheath residents made use of the service.

Vulnerabilities such as age were discussed with awareness also of women at home with young children and no car. Some had asked how they would know the signs and when to leave. It was also pointed out that an injury such as a broken leg could result in someone being temporarily vulnerable.

The feeling of community has notably increased after she visited homes in her area one facilitator noted. People have been appreciative of those who have taken up the facilitator's role. One facilitator said, 'People are so grateful that this is happening'. Some facilitators had door knocked everyone in their area, others had taken opportunities like a garage sale to talk to people and then followed up with visits. Another facilitator had made up a form and dropped it in people's letter boxes. She had received several responses and information was further distributed through neighbours.

Responsibility became an issue of discussion after it was raised by one facilitator.

Responsibility for a home for people with a disability was raised by another facilitator and what she needed to do for them. She found it a bit daunting initially and then mentioned an individual she came across in her area who keeps to herself. How this person could be approached was discussed and RFS

members pointed out that they could visit her with the facilitator.

Level of responsibility facilitators felt was discussed. One woman who had distributed information forms had recorded the information in a book and felt some responsibility for knowing what to do with that information and the importance of keeping it private. She then said that she was not home very much so although people had her number it was not likely that she would be home or able to contact people. She talked about groups of people within the street who are in contact with each other. She said she has no personal information about people. It was unclear what needed or was expected by people as to what would happen with the information.

Another woman talked about helping people in the street if they needed to leave noting that she now had to be at the RFS so would not be available. She said everyone in the street now knew that she would not be there to help.

Another facilitator had distributed information saying he would be contacting people in coming weeks. He said there were only a couple of people who were vulnerable and they had plans and people to help them. If he had identified anyone who was in need of assistance he would have spoken to the 'appropriate people' about them and kept an eye on them.

Most people had left early in previous fires and there seemed to be a good level of support in the street but there were a few households that just wanted to be left alone. Those who were not at home when he door knocked he left a flyer for and two subsequently contacted him. He felt he had done as much as he could to give people an opportunity to contact him. Many young families and kids in the street as well as older and single people.

He had found it was a good opportunity to meet people. It has given him an opening for talking with people when he sees them in the street. Others noted that they now had longer conversations with people they knew previously but talked with more now.

One facilitator raised the issue of making her spreadsheet of people's information available to others and suggested a secure place on the centre's website. The coordinator said that this was not possible for the centre as they did not want the responsibility of having people's personal information.



Connections are being made within the street and already existing connections being recognised. It was noted that distributing information to people that 'something was happening' was a useful part of the role.

Power outages were discussed and the number of people who have electric phones and no mobiles so would not have access to a phone. Some facilitators had found out those households in their areas that had generators.

Time was required in setting up the program but now that it was running it was less time consuming to maintain and keep momentum. BANC will continue to manage HUFF through volunteers.

Heads Up For Fire 2015 Survey Analysis

A survey was completed by all who attended workshops and street events. There were 157 surveys completed and entered for analysis.

Gender

Almost half of participants were male and just over half were female.

Table 2: Gender

	<i>n</i>	%
Male	74	47
Female	83	53

Age groups

The highest proportion of participants as indicated in Table 3, was 42.4 % were in the 65-74 year age group, 26.6 % in the 50-64 year age group and 21 % in the 75-84 year age group. There were 5.5 % under 50 years and 4.4 % over 85 years. Age groups over 50 years of age were overrepresented and under 50 years underrepresented when compared with the age structure for Blackheath from the 2011 census as shown below Table 4.

Table 3: Age groups

Age groups	<i>n</i>	%
<34	4	2.5
35-49	5	3
50-64	42	27
65-74	67	42
75-84	33	21
85+	7	4.4

Table 4: Blackheath age structure from census

Blackheath Age Structure*	
<18	20.2
18-24	5.40%
25-34	7.90%
35-49	21.90%
50-59	15.70%
60-69	16.70%
70-84	10.80%
85+	1.40%

* Based on 2011 census Atlas ID <http://atlas.id.com.au/blue-mountains>

Living Circumstances

Almost 60 % lived with their partner and 28 % lived alone. Most participants are not people living with children with only 6% stating they lived with their partner and children.

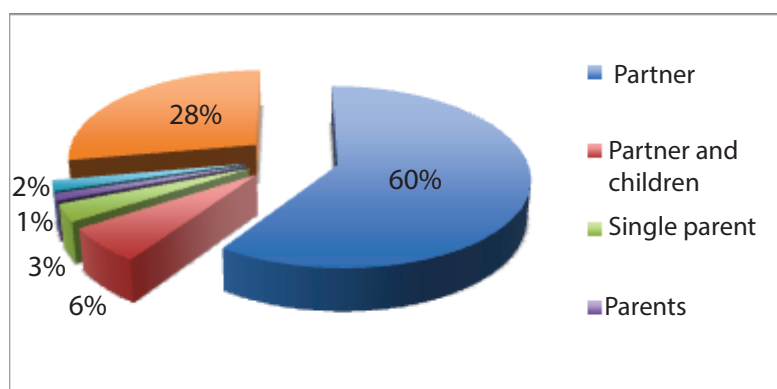


Figure 1: Living circumstances

Extra help in emergency

Twenty two % indicated they would require help in an emergency, which is a substantial number and possibly reflects the age of people involved in the program with two thirds being over 65 years of age.

Table 5: Need for help

Extra help in emergency	
% Yes	% No
22	78

Proximity to bush land

Participants are from across the village with just over half living on or across the road from bush land and just under half living in the next street or two or more streets away.

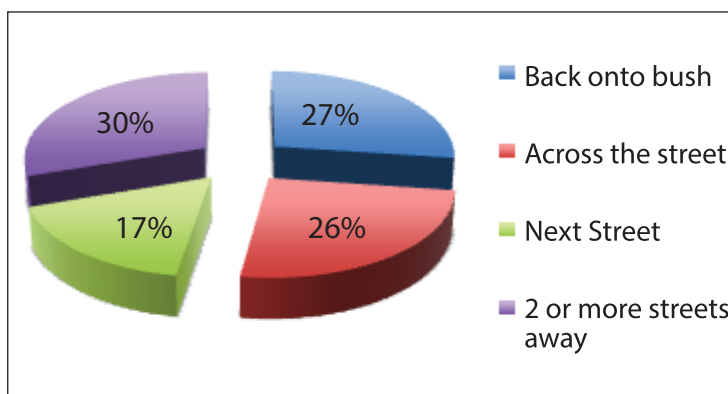


Figure 2: Proximity to bush land

Contact with neighbours

Neighbour contact appears regular and widespread both in number of neighbours seen and frequency of seeing neighbours. Thirty eight said they saw one neighbour daily and 13 saw two neighbours daily. Eight and nine people saw three and four neighbours daily and eight said they saw five to eight neighbours daily. Twenty five said they saw one neighbour on a weekly basis and 30 said they saw two neighbours on a weekly basis. Twelve and thirteen said they saw three or four neighbours per week and between one and five said they saw five and up to 20 neighbours weekly. On a monthly basis 35 said they saw from one to three neighbours and the remainder between four and 50. Further detail can be seen in Table 6.

Table 6: Frequency seeing neighbours

See neighbours		
<i>Daily</i>	<i>Weekly</i>	<i>Monthly</i>
38	25	10
13	30	12
8	12	13
9	13	6
3	3	0
3	5	0
2	2	2
76	4	4
	3	4
	1	3
	3	1
	101	1
		2
		1
		59



Work

Two thirds of participants did not work and of the third who did work 26% worked full time and the remainder part time. Four were retired, one worked one day per fortnight and two worked a varied number of days.

Table 7: Number working

<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>
52	98

Table 8: No. of days worked

<i>No. of days</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
1	2	4.3
2	9	19.6
3	8	17.4
4	6	13.0
5	12	26.1

Emergency preparedness

Seventy % had talked about what to do in an emergency and 61% had the contact details of neighbours while 56% said they had made an emergency plan and prepared their house. Only 30% said they had practiced an emergency plan and 34% that they had an emergency kit.

Table 9: Emergency Preparations

	<i>In place n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Plan to do n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>No response %</i>
Talked about what to do in an emergency	111	70	29	18	12
Created emergency kit	54	34	63	40	26
Made emergency plan	88	56	45	28	16
Practised emergency plan	47	30	64	40	30
Prepared house	89	56	43	27	17
Have contact details of neighbours	96	61	42	27	12

Of those who had made a decision 41% said they would leave early, 27% that they would stay and defend and 27% that they were undecided.

Table 10: Bushfire plan

<i>Leave early</i>		<i>Stay and defend</i>		<i>Undecided</i>	
<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
64	41	43	27	42	27

Over two thirds, 67%, said that they met new people. Sixteen did not answer the question.

The majority, 72% had heard about HUFF from a flyer, 28% by word of mouth and 9% through the Gazette. Some had nominated more than one source. Less than 2% nominated other sources, Facebook, the Echo, email or a website and 3% had seen posters. Four had heard about the program through BANC and one from the men's shed.

Comments Analysis

There were 80 comments in response to the question about reasons for participating in the HUFF program.

Analysis using keyword queries in NVivo resulted in the following results. As Table indicates there was a strong emphasis on information, knowledge, neighbours and community as well as planning for emergency. Table 11 shows the terms used and their frequency of use.



Table 11: Terms mentioned by number of times

Terms	Number of times mentioned
Info/ Information	21
Neighbour/hood	10
Community	9
Emergency	9
Plan	8
Aware	7
Know/Knowledge	7
Advice	4
Local	4
Meet	4
Help	3
Prepar*	3
Procedure	3
Support	3
Understand	3
Assist	2
Learn	2
Risk	2

A quarter of those who commented mentioned accessing information and the value of working with their local community and neighbours. Comments related to developing awareness and knowledge, learning, getting advice in order to be prepared for emergencies, knowing procedures and strategies and understanding the risks.

Comments included:

- More information on local plans/activities
- Working with community in emergency
- Being part of neighbourhood plans
- Up to date information
- A greater understanding of procedures required during a bushfire
- Meeting people in the area
- Local awareness
- Meet neighbours
- Clarity around emergency plans



Blue Mountains Neighbourhood Community Action Framework for Natural Disaster and Emergency Preparedness Workshop

Testing of the synthesized “BSAFE” model by desktop implementation with the project partners and community representatives was carried out through a three hour workshop. Ten community organisation managers and community development workers attended with the community engagement officer for Blue Mountains from the Rural Fire Services (RFS). The workshop was held at the Mid-Mountains Community Centre. The facilitators were two of the researchers and there were two note takers who were also staff from community organisations.

Community organisations represented were Katoomba Neighbourhood Centre (KNC), Springwood Neighbourhood Centre Cooperative (SNCC), Mountains Outreach Community Service (MOCS), Mid Mountains Neighbourhood Centre (MMNC), Australian Red Cross NSW Emergency Service (Aust. Red Cross NSW) and Mountains Community Resources Network (MCRN).

As part of the Blue Mountains Resilience and Preparedness Working Group and the Blue Mountains Sustainable Approaches to Fire and Emergencies Project funded through the Department of Justice, members were invited to participate in the workshop to explore an Action Model for Natural Disaster and Emergency Preparedness between and across the community sector and relevant agencies.

The workshop sought to explore and map organisational community connections and identify strengths and weaknesses and the roles and responsibilities of organisations in natural disaster and emergency, both within and across agencies. The workshop was designed to explore the existing and potential links and connections through the filter of an ordinary day and an extraordinary day. The aim was to assist in the development of strategies to maximise strengths between organisational capabilities, identify the weakest connections between organisations and then construct a framework of available resources and an interagency communication framework for emergency and disaster.

The workshop involved an introduction from one of the researchers followed by four sessions where organisational worksheets were completed and discussed. The agenda is shown below.

The evaluation indicated that the aim of the workshop was clear to eight of the ten participants who and the aim was considered to be a good one by all participants. Eight said the workshop made them think in new ways about the role or potential role of their organisation.



More Than a Fire Plan and Meet Your Street Follow Up Data

Further data

Follow up surveys were from people who attended workshops from across the mountains.

Table 1: Location of More Than a Fireplan

Where attended More Than a Fireplan	Total	%
Blaxland	11	27
Katoomba	17	41
Springwood	11	27
Blank	2	5

Table 2: Location of Meet Your Street Event

Location Meet Your Street event	MYS
3 Bona Vista Road	5
Noble Park, Bullaburra	25
Hazelbrook Camp Fletcher	20
Hazelbrook Fire Shed	5
Horizon Park and Conference Centre in Hazelbrook	5
Lawson Neighbourhood Centre	5
Queens Road, Lawson	5
Medlow Bath October 2015	25
Wentworth Falls Lakes	5

Preparedness events attended

A higher proportion of those attending More Than a Fire Plan had also attended other events.

Table 3: Preparedness events attended

Did you attend any other emergency preparedness?	Yes	No
Meet Your Street	40	50
More Than a Fire Plan	51	41

Meet Your Street

Screening of Fire Stories was attended by one, while four spoke with RFS or other Emergency Service. Other events attended included open days at Linden fire station, Woodford fire station, HUFF at Mt Victoria, Springwood bowling club after the fire 2014.

Two were CFU members, another had been in the RFS for 44 years and was a Senior Dept. Captain in the fire service and had spoken to several people in the area about electricity and fire safety

More Than a Fire Plan

Screening of Fire Stories was attended by two, two spoke with RFS or other Emergency Service and one reported attending a Meet Your Street event.

Seventeen described other preparedness related activities they had been engaged in. Four had been to a street meeting or workshop at Blackheath, two at Blackheath Area Neighbourhood Centre events, and one a fire meeting at Blackheath RFS.

Three had been to events at Springwood Sports Club with one having worked at the recovery centre

Springwood and attending Anglican churches Springwood events.

Two had been at events in Blaxland, one at a Blaxland Neighbourhood Centre workshop and the other Blaxland primary school workshop.

Two had been to Elizabeth Evatt workshops.

Four referred to being with the RFS. One mentioned a First aid course and another workshop through counseling and emergency care work.

Another had run events and ran RFS training and conferences and went to these too, used to work at RFS, retired now, the community engagement officer for MT Wilson and Mt Ervine fire brigade. Another had attended a 'huge meeting at christian centre in Katoomba' during the Springwood fire in 2013.

Preparedness measures

Table 4: Preparedness measures since More Than a Fire Plan

% Since attending More Than a Fire Plan	Now in place	Plan to do	Previously in place	Blank
Talked re plan to leave early	32	12	51	5
Talked re plan to stay and defend	29	12	39	17
Plan if cannot leave area	39	22	34	5
Created emergency kit	37	29	29	5
Planned for unable to leave house	44	17	34	5
Practised emergency plans	37	27	22	15
Prepared house	39	7	49	5
Have street contacts	39	15	37	10

Table 5: Preparedness measures since Meet Your Street

% Since Meet Your Street BBQ	Now in place	Plan to do	Previously in place
Talked re plan to leave early		20	80
Talked re plan stay and defend		10	90
Planned for unable to leave area	15	35	50
Created an emergency kit		50	50
Planned for unable to leave house		45	55
Practised emergency plans		55	45
Prepared house	10	10	80
Have contact details of people in street		30	70

How likely are you to prepare your house for the bush fire season?

Reason for your answer

More Than a Fire Plan Responses

In most cases people said it was the sensible thing to do and they wanted to protect their houses or were required by their fire plan to do so. People also mentioned being close to the bush, being prepared made them feel less anxious, it is something they regularly do, experience of recent fires and being in the RFS. Two had said they were very unlikely and two quite unlikely to prepare their houses.

Reasons given were:

Because there is only so much we can do-live in a timber cottage on 2.5 acres - we are in a flame zone so cottage can't be saved if a fire comes.

Don't need to, am not in a bushfire area.

Meet Your Street Responses

Four said so that their house would not burn down, four for preparedness and four stated they lived near bush. Others referred to taking pride in their home, knowing the risk, 'it's the right thing to do', 'you have to be ready', being in a fire prone area and being very bushfire aware. Some were motivated by being parents or having pets and others mentioned neighbours and wildlife. There was awareness of needing to prepare before the season and ember attack:

We live in a bush fire area prone area, we have been through a bushfire before so keen to get organised before the season.

You have to be ready, very short notice about bushfires, don't leave it to chance.

The ember and things, if prepared outside of house there's a better chance the fire won't take hold

One said that being near the fire brigade made them less vulnerable:

We aren't particularly vulnerable, live next door to the fire brigade.

Other preparedness activities since More Than a Fire Plan

Nine said 'no' and one n/a. Others had reviewed their fire plan 'based on the talk and made amendments as required', 'bought a corded phone for use when the power is out', checked BAL rating, rechecked emergency kit, 'bought fire blankets and packed an emergency kit', cleaned up around house and garden, better organised what would need to go in the car, joined the RFS, reviewed and increased insurance, gotten extra smoke detectors

Other preparedness activities since Meet Your Street

Eight said 'no', four had had further discussions including one with a daughter in care, one said there had been 'talk and no action', and another had got advice on cutting down trees. Others had bought a fire extinguisher and blanket, organised with the vet on how to carry pets, 'partly downloaded the fire plan app and got contact details of neighbours and put in a more accessible place on a magnet on the fridge'. Other statements included:

Information they could pass on to me.

Probably need some more follow up sessions after the bbq.

More aware, make sure there are no leaves around the house, water and buckets around, shovels and protective clothes, torch and radio.

Gathered some contacts for HUFF to follow up.

Other actions result of More Than a Fire Plan

Important to protect home from ember attack-no flammables in the area.

Yes, sat down with elderly neighbour and worked out a fireplan for her. Revamped fireplan at preschool, where I worked and had the fire brigade come and talk to the children too.

Reviewed insurance, had extensive discussions with partner, made lists of valuables, put together a small emergency kit, talked about a fireplan.

Physically preparing property is more routine now, battery operated radio and emergency item put together, discussion about how a plan increases emotional preparedness so this has meant the RFS fire plan has been gone through, partner has decided to stay while i would leave, had more conversations about what we would do, more conversations about how he would protect himself.

Going through that fire you realise what you didn't have in place, fire we went through more influential than the w/s

Yes, I've checked out my environment and how to escape, gone through a couple of scenarios in my mind of how to get out, I've identified my escape routes and what to do if I'm blocked.

Online training, reading brochures online, chatting to people who have lived here a long time.

Making decisions now that I am older, we used to have a pump and were very confident to use it, but now older we have decided not to use it, not as physically capable now. Place to go has been organised and we doubled the house insurance.

We have prepared our emergency box with the recommended items. We have saved copies of important documents to a flash drive and I have taken this to work. We have placed the important documents in the emergency box. We have a list of items to take if time permits and where they are located. We are regularly having the gutters cleaned on the house we rent. We keep as much vegetation away from the house as possible. Have stored photos in a suitable container that could be taken in the event of evacuation.

Was unaware of this function, otherwise I would certainly have attended!

Concerns re managing in an emergency More Than a Fire Plan

6 said they had no concerns

A major concern was with roads and being able to get out of the area when necessary. Others mentioned age, emotional well being and physical limitations. Mobile phone reception was mentioned having to stay and defend, neighbours not having prepared their properties. A 'tendency toward evacuation'

There is only one road out from our house, along Hat Hill Road, Blackheath. This could be blocked in an emergency and prevent us leaving early.

Increasing traffic on Hawkesbury Rd and likely bottlenecks. No alternative route.

My only concern is having sufficient notice/time of warning to get out, live at the bottom of a gully and only 1 dirt road in and out.

Major road congestion on Hawkesbury Rd and G.W. Hwy.

Transport? Only being able to get out of my street, as it is a cul de sac and I live at the extreme end of it, we hit Old Bathurst Rd and that is the only way out.

We live on Hawkesbury road so we can leave our place but there is only one road in and one road out. Other than the exit out of here...there have been changes to the Highway.

I would need help for the old person in the house.

The fact I'm 70 and not in good health. Just hope daughter/friends would be there.

Not being physically able to clean gutters and get up on the roof. We have decided where in the house we'd go in an emergency.

Yes, I'm relatively new in the mountains (4years) so don't really have any experience of a bushfire emergency.

Looting.

We need better wireless coverage. Bad where we are- we have wifi booster in our house-this is critical-communication in a fire situation is critical - telephone tower is critical

Mobile phone reception is very patchy during a fire, communication so very important, need good coverage.

We would plan to leave early and prepare house as best we could before we leave. If stuck we have a weatherboard house so would have concerns about staying and defending.

Keeping up to date.

Trained as flight stewardess, so have training in fire - I don't panic in an emergency.

Our biggest risk comes from next door neighbour, he isn't prepared, fire got into his property and came up the side into our property. Not only getting your own property prepared, need neighbours to do this too!

Arrogance of traffic controllers in an emergency.....no exceptions to the rule.

I'm confident in fire and emergencies services and how they respond to emergencies.

No, every emergency is going to be different and don't know how I'm going to handle each one.

No, have strategies to deal with the situation - it's just putting it into practice on the day.

No, everything is planned out.

No, not as good as I used to be, but used to be fighting fires 50 years ago, have been through a few good fires, very experienced.

No - would have to get out and get my cat out.

No, have my list ready, plan ready. Have a car ready, if needed I can evacuate.

There seems to be an increasing tendency to evacuate? Which tends to become a very late evacuation and then there are people trying to get out at once and the police have to organise, There is an over-emphasis on evacuation without qualifying it.

Experience I haven't come close to -very frightening-haven't experienced it so not sure what I would do-can't rely on things you normally rely on such as power and water-maybe could put out little fires.

Very concerned about my own emotional wellbeing in an emergency, so that is why I've decided to go early, our house isn't well designed to withstand fire, no static water source is a concern.

Not unless you could make me braver, not as brave as I was when I was younger, bushfires have become more horrific.

You can do as much as you can however if not home when an event occurred we would not be as prepared and depending on the damage would lose more than if there was advance warning of the impending event. No one can predict this situation.

Eleven said they had no concerns with one saying 'pride myself that I am logical when necessary' and another 'hoping that HUFF training will help'. Roads were considered a concern and where you could go, ie. safe places.

Not really, fire brigade in this area are very good, concerned about my neighbour on my left with the long grass.

Very few roads in the mountains, one road in one road out, very few options therefore transport issues, abc and fireys are amazing.

Biggest concern is the traffic flow, the northern side is a bit of a trap, very few exists out of it, narrow roads are an area of concern.

Just know that we have in the past 3 years planned to stay and defend until children came along, so when to leave is a bit more .

Blue fm.... Please put more updates on the fire on the radio station!

Concerned that there is very little direction as to where you could go in the case of an emergency, both of my kids live in the mts. And if I'm effected they would be effected too, they have kids and the husband would be off fighting fires, I tell them not to worry about me but that might change in the future...not getting any younger!

The question about the safe places in the mts. There are no safe places, no designated safe places, so our plan involves travelling to Campbelltown or Sydney.

I couldn't get the generator out of the shed, husband away and he has the car most of the time so would be without transport, trains are a problem if husband away, I'd be on foot... not good.

What has been most influential in helping you with emergency preparations?

More Than a Fire Plan

Twelve specifically mentioned the seminar/workshop More Than a Fire Plan. Some people have taken advantage of all opportunities to attend events and receive assistance. Sources noted were RFS website, community meetings/seminars, Working at the Recovery Centre, More Than a Fireplan event, support from Springwood Anglican Churches and posts on Facebook from Winmalee Fire Brigade, Blue Mts Firewatch, the Bushfire Plan document, Neighbourhood Centre, experience in the RFS, experience of fire and conversations with neighbours, guidelines in salvation army book and the red cross book.

The kit that was provided that assists you to create your plan and emergency box. We had not

thought of a few items that were on the list. Discussion during the workshop and hearing from the emergency professionals on what to expect.

The RFS website was very useful in helping us prepare a fire plan. We have attended three community meetings/seminars and were given very useful advice.

I was forced to evacuate my home previously, a very distressing emotion.

Working at the Recovery Centre, More Than a Fireplan event, support from Springwood Anglican Churches and posts on Facebook from Winmalee Fire Brigade, Blue Mts Firewatch etc.

The Bushfire Plan document.

Neighbourhood Centre.

Thinking through a plan. Being realistic. Assuming the worst and trying to be prepared.

The workshop I attended in Katoomba in '14, plus the advice of my sons and friends.

Preparing the house and making plans.

Facebook: Blue Mountains Firewatch.

That W/S was key and we need to have more of these-great experts-right people, right info and out of this we took this info and acted on it.

3 community seminars in previous years has been helpful, fire at Winmalee helped us to recognise the emergency of it all-we dodged a bullet at this stage cause B'heath was threatened too.

Joining the RFS.

Attending these meetings / W/S .

My 12 years experience with the RFS , finished this in 2006.

This W/S very useful, got all the brochures from W/S, very aware of emergencies, street has mains water, fire chief lives 2 houses away!

RFS, very informative, good courses.

Had thought about things before W/S but W/S has heightened our awareness-W/S, one event that brought it all together.

Handout that were given out at the W/S, really helpful, information at W/S allowed us to become confident.

Those meetings got me thinking, so there was discussion in my office.... BANC, discussion with RFS leaders and Huff leaders.

FRS website, speaking to RFS members, south Katoomba Fire Brigade, advice being shared in the facebook room.

Knowledge gained thro joining brigade, my working in the area, going thro a fire, ordinary people/ community groups can come together and do this too, to be resilience communities it needs to be a joint effort.

Attending these W/S as we did, getting all the information.

Some books on bushfires, about the Blue Mts bushfires was very helpful about gum trees, they allow them to fall so the nutrients in the leaves of fallen branches helps them to survive?

Workshop

Having experienced it and conversations with neighbours.

Common sense, experience, savvy.

Seminars and RFS website.

Common sense, what I know myself.

Experience, down at Emu Heights, where fire threatened them (son nd family), very scary the experience of that.

That W/S (BBQ) cause I was very naïve ? Came from the suburbs.

Years and years of RFS training, was a trainer in the Blue Mts service.

Chatting with people, the lady across the street has lived here a long time and she is into bushcare. Live in a block of villas, one woman's son is a fireman so he has talked about different things to do. These bushfires seminars.

Fear of fire.

Guidelines in salvation army book and the red cross book.

Reading thro fire plan itself...itemising things to do and get a kit ready. W/S helpful...the verbal interactions were good too.

Going to RFS talks, receiving literature, info from council in the rates notice, newspapers, talking to people.

The kit that was provided that assists you to create your plan and emergency box. We had not thought of a few items that were on the list. Discussion during the workshop and hearing from the emergency professionals on what to expect.

Meet Your Street

RFS website, 'meeting at the park, meeting with other people in the area', reading the Bushfire Survival Plan, HUFF, conversations and information from the bbq, experience in SES and fire services and of fires.

Taking responsibility yourself, the bush fire brigade only helps, building and managing your affairs to accommodate that fact that you live in a fire zone....cause it is going to burn

My 2 boys!

I do suppose that these events influence me, have info and handouts and you do pick up info and ideas Probably the RFS website about bushfires, meeting at the park, meeting with other people in the area Reading the Bushfire Survival Plan.

Downloaded one of those plans from the RFS website.... Making a fire plan....you write out a whole plan.

Info I got off fire people at the meet and greet e.g. Safest routes out etc.

HUFF and fire kits. I read up on these, discussions with neighbours and friends given the area we live in. It should be on the fore front of our in summer.

Spending time in the CFS and I guess discussions with neighbours, even though they are only street parties! They are good. In 2001 fire brought the street together and now we have a street Xmas party. With the CFS there were monthly meet ups in the street and someone else does this now that we are retired from the CFS. We retired in 2014.

Flyers we picked up on the day, conversations we had at the BBQ.

Probably communication- the radio/TV they keep me informed, was a member of the North Sydney SES in the "80's and 90's that information was invaluable.

Nothing, my awareness of horrible fires in Melbourne, where we spent a W/E, more effected by fire elsewhere than here, where I live is unlikely to have a fire.

The years of being in the brigade and the things I've seen.

My neighbours, discussing the situation with them, especially the fact that they have lived here longer than us.

Talking to members of the bush fire brigade, my 2 sons in law are in the RFS!

My husband he organised the generator, he knows a bit about fires, he has friends who fly the planes that put out fires. He has kept a level head during bushfires, so he helps me. I am a chook with its head cut off!

I think it is important to be prepared, how to work around the house and get it ready, always think about what your doing incase of a fire coming, be always alert!

Attending W/S and checking insurance and weather you are adequately covered, aware of bushfire regulations in terms of building.

Involvement with the CFS, meeting with other people gave me the impetus to get things down around the house, get prepared.

Having gone through a fire, so we have practice!



Recommendations

The following recommendations are made on the basis of the BSAFE findings.

Recommendation 1

The BSAFE Community Action Framework be considered as a transferable model for community preparedness using a range of community engagement, participation and education strategies to increase community capacity around disaster and emergency preparation.

Recommendation 2

The unique partnership between emergency services and Neighbourhood Centres and other organisations formed to deliver preparedness programs in the community should continue to be developed and supported by local council, participating organisations and other relevant agencies into the future.

Recommendation 3

Neighbourhood Centres, due to their unique community connections and networks, are well placed to incorporate disaster preparedness activities into their core business. As a part of their mandate to build resilient and sustainable individuals and communities, Neighbourhood Centres should be delivering disaster preparedness programs as part of their core community capacity building business, not as an 'add-on' activity.

Recommendation 4

Emergency services particularly RFS and SES, be encouraged to review their abilities to engage in, support and resource the BSAFE Community Action Framework programs to be delivered in high seasons e.g. the dedication of an RFS volunteer or community engagement officer able to attend scheduled programs in bushfire season, even if appliances and more brigade members cannot be rostered to attend.

Recommendation 5

Meet Your Street is a first contact opportunity which is most effective when held in local neighbourhoods, especially in the lead up to the fire season. All elements of the program should be maintained, in particular the engagement/discussion and survey tool (Appendix 1) as these provide a stimulus for conversation and for households to think about their level of preparation.

Recommendation 6

More Than a Fire Plan should follow the delivery of Meet Your Street as it can be held in more central areas for larger numbers of people and its aim is to provide more detailed information regarding how to construct a household preparedness plan. It can be promoted at Meet Your Street events.

Recommendation 7

HUFF should also be promoted at Meet Your Street events, particularly where people nominate themselves as street facilitators. HUFF needs to be instigated within the area by neighbourhoods and requires committed residents to initiate and maintain it. Therefore active advertising for HUFF facilitators should be encouraged at all community fire awareness events. When there are sufficient numbers of interested street facilitators workshops could be held to train them.

Recommendation 8

As the data collection instruments are already developed, it makes sense that each of the three programs continues to collect information from their attendees at various points. This information can then be collated and compared with the other programs and deductions drawn as to the demographic attending, preparation plans and activities proposed, and in the follow up activities making a determination as to how many residents completed fire preparedness plans as a result of attending a program.

Recommendation 9

Further research regarding gender is required to explore the relatively low attendance of men at all programs. RFS could consider holding program at their brigade sheds where men are more likely to attend.

Recommendation 10

Networking opportunities between volunteer and other organisations need to be explored in order to provide services to the most vulnerable in the community: those on a low income, the frail aged, single parents and people with chronic conditions. Fore preparedness activities with which they may require assistance include tree removal, gutter cleaning and the like can be managed. The local council needs to better circulate what they are able to provide for vulnerable residents in need of fire preparedness assistance.

Recommendation 11

The responsibility of a HUFF facilitator for residents in their designated area, and for information they collect as part of the HUFF program, needs to be clarified through construction of a policy. Responsibility should be no more than raising awareness about the need for a plan and assisting with developing a plan for residents in their designated areas.



Conclusions

The BSAFE Community Action Framework is premised upon a partnership approach between emergency services and community organisations. Community based organisations are embedded in communities and as a part of their core business they have a defined role in building and enhancing sustainable approaches to community preparedness and readiness. In this way preparedness and readiness are understood as core business, rather than as an 'add-on' option.

Continuing to develop partnerships and involvement of communities in disaster preparation and planning is important for optimising shared responsibility and increasing community resilience. Engagement tools and strategies are central to the approach outlined in this report and in order to monitor developments ongoing data collection and analysis is also important.

The three programs analysed in this report proved to be important in assisting to create a more prepared community, although each program was found to be important in different ways. To summarise, Meet Your Street attracts families with children to meet in their local area, More Than a Fire Plan provides more specific information due to the range of experts involved at central locations, and Heads Up For Fire is effective in raising detailed awareness of households on a neighbourhood level. It was also identified that these programs could be adapted to target more vulnerable groups and individuals by modifying them in terms of length and limiting content to key messages and through one to one follow up support offered by the relevant organisation after attendance at a program i.e. follow up support and facilitation after attendance at a program to develop a plan.

The use of community education, community engagement, community participation and community capacity building is the basis for each of these approaches and speaks strongly to their transferability and sustainability. Particularly when responsibility for delivery is accepted by locally embedded community organisations such as Neighbourhood Centres, working in partnership with emergency services and gazetted welfare agencies to deliver the programs.

The three core programs comprising the BSAFE Community Action Framework appear to work best and attract more community interest and attendance when there is a tangible link to the need to be prepared. In the Blue Mountains that is best expressed around the declaration of the bushfire season and the high storm season. This would suggest the need for emergency services to be able to engage in and support the roll out of these programs in high season.



Appendices

BSAFE List of Tools

Community Connections Survey
Community Connections and Preparedness Survey

Engagement tools for each
More Than A Fire Plan
Meet Your Street
Heads Up For Fire

Follow up tools
More Than A Fire Plan
Meet Your Street
Heads Up For Fire

Workshop tools
Worksheets 1-4
Worksheet 1 - Exploring an Ordinary Day
Workshop 2 - An Extraordinary Day
Workshop 3 - Communications
Workshop 4 - Relocation and Business Continuity

Community organisation engagement tools



Appendix 2: Survey tool

Connected Communities Project

Invitation to participate

All information is unidentifiable and is treated in strict confidence

The research is intended to identify community connections in the Blue Mountains.

We would like to hear from all Blue Mountains residents.

Are you **connected** to your community?

Do you **assist** someone in your street or neighbourhood with household tasks and/or daily activities?

Do you **need assistance** with household tasks and/or daily activities?

- Your contribution to this research is very much appreciated.
- It is important to receive your feedback so that we can be more informed about community connection and support needs.
- The postcard will take less than 10 minutes to complete.

Thank you!

Are you interested in participating further in the Community Connections Project?

If you are:

- interested in volunteering with your local Neighbourhood Centre
- over 65 years and interested in being further involved in the research by participating in a focus group and/or interview about your community connections at the Springwood or Katoomba Neighbourhood Centre
- would like to be part of an Older Peoples Advisory Committee with council?

Please Contact:

Please return to ... as soon as possible by post or by dropping in to a library or council office. Survey closes .



COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS SURVEY

(Please tick or circle your answer as required)

A1. Your Gender: Male Female Other		A2. Your Postcode:	
A3. Your Age (please tick one box): <input type="checkbox"/> 18-24 <input type="checkbox"/> 25-39 <input type="checkbox"/> 40-64 <input type="checkbox"/> 65-74 <input type="checkbox"/> 75+			
A4. Do you identify as: Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Non-indigenous			
A5. Your current living arrangements are best described as living with: spouse/partner children parents others alone			
A6. Is speaking English difficult for you? Yes No			
A7. Do you have a chronic illness or disability that limits your everyday activities? Yes No			
B. Connections in your local area (please tick 'yes' or 'no')			
1. Do you attend local festivals or other community activities?			
2. Do you volunteer?			
3. Do you go out for entertainment at least once a month, e.g. cinema, theatre or restaurant?			
4. Are you involved in any local associations, clubs, religious or other group?			
5. Do you share a meal with friends at least once a month?			

C. Assistance		
1. Do you require assistance with household tasks, such as putting bins on the street?		
2. Do you provide assistance to people in your neighbourhood with household tasks such as putting bins on the street?		
3. If you require help who is most likely to provide it? Neighbour Family Friend		

D. How often do you ... ?	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Yearly	Never
see family members					
see friends					
attend social gatherings					
talk with people in your street					
chat with someone while shopping					

E. To what extent do you feel: (please circle a number for each)	Not at all					Very much
connected to your neighbourhood	1	2	3	4	5	
neighbours in your area help each other out	1	2	3	4	5	
your neighbourhood is clean and tidy	1	2	3	4	5	
your neighbourhood is friendly	1	2	3	4	5	
support with daily activities is available to you	1	2	3	4	5	
safe in your neighbourhood, and	1	2	3	4	5	
able to access information on services you need	1	2	3	4	5	

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS AND PREPAREDNESS SURVEY

The following survey is for households with children aged 0–11 years. It will allow us to gather more precise and detailed information about the area and the connections that families have within their area. The survey is anonymous and voluntary. You may have completed a similar survey previously. You can still fill out this one for the purpose of this project.

We would like ALL adults in a household where there are children aged 0–11 to complete a separate survey where possible.

Community connections are an indicator of the level of engagement for people in the area and the sorts of contacts people have that are most important. The information helps us to understand and plan better for support needs of families.

This is a community collaborative project co-ordinated by Mountains Outreach Community Service in partnership with Charles Sturt University. For more information contact [. The survey will take about 10 mins to complete. Survey closes . Please deposit your completed survey in the box provided.](#)

Please tick or circle as required.

A1. Your Gender: Male Female Other	A2. Your Postcode:
A3. Your Age group (please tick one box): <input type="checkbox"/> <34 <input type="checkbox"/> 35-49 <input type="checkbox"/> 50-64 <input type="checkbox"/> 65+	
A4. Do you identify as: Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Non-indigenous	
A5. Your current living arrangements are best described as (please tick one): <input type="checkbox"/> partner and children <input type="checkbox"/> single parent <input type="checkbox"/> grandparent and children <input type="checkbox"/> carer/guardian and children	
A6. Number of children in your household aged 0–4 years (please circle) 0 1 2 3 or more	
A7. Number of children in your household aged 5–11 years (please circle) 0 1 2 3 or more	
A8. Is speaking English difficult for you? Yes No	
A9. Do you have a chronic illness or disability that limits your everyday activities? Yes No	
A10. Do you have a child in your care who has additional needs, a chronic illness or disability that limits their everyday activities? Yes No	

B. Connections in your local area (please tick 'yes' or 'no')	Yes	No
1. Do you attend local festivals or other community activities?		
2. Do you volunteer for child related organisations such as school, sporting or other activities children are involved in?		
3. Do you volunteer for non-child related organisations such as environmental, assisting the aged, or other organisations?		
4. Do you go out for entertainment at least once a month, e.g. cinema, theatre or restaurant?		
5. Are you or your children involved in any out of school activities such as local associations, clubs, religious or other group?		
6. Do you share a meal with friends at least once a month?		
7. Do you require assistance with family activities, such as car pooling, child-minding, preparing meals?		
8. Do you provide assistance to people in your neighbourhood with family activities, such as car pooling, child-minding, preparing meals?		

C. If you require help urgently who is most likely to provide it (please circle ONE only)?

Neighbour Family Friend No one

D. How often do you ... ?	Daily	Weekly	Monthly	Yearly	Never
see family members					
see friends					
attend social gatherings					
talk with people in your street					
chat with someone while shopping					
chat with others while attending activities with your children					

E. To what extent do you feel (please circle a number for each):	Not at all Very much				
connected to your neighbourhood	1	2	3	4	5
neighbours in your area help each other out	1	2	3	4	5
your neighbourhood is clean and tidy	1	2	3	4	5
your neighbourhood is friendly	1	2	3	4	5
support with daily activities is available to you	1	2	3	4	5
safe in your neighbourhood, and	1	2	3	4	5
able to access information on services you need	1	2	3	4	5

F. Work and home locations

1. Do you work more than 20 kms away from home? Yes No
2. How many days per week do you engage in paid or voluntary work away from home (please circle)?
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
3. Do you have access to a motor vehicle all the time? Yes No
4. How close to the bush do you live (please circle one)?
a) Back onto bush b) Across the street from bush c) Next street d) 2 or more streets away

G. Attitude to emergency situations

On a scale of 1-5 where 1 is not concerned at all and 5 is very concerned, how concerned are you about the following (please tick):

	Not at all concerned				Very concerned
1. a house fire	1	2	3	4	5
2. a bush fire	1	2	3	4	5
3. loss of power	1	2	3	4	5
4. road closures	1	2	3	4	5
5. train delays or cancellations	1	2	3	4	5
6. high wind and storms	1	2	3	4	5

H. Preparation measures

Which of the following actions have you taken or plan to take (please tick ALL that are relevant):

Action	In Place	Plan to do	Haven't thought about	Not important
1. Talked about what we would do during an emergency with spouse/partner				
2. Talked about it with the children				
3. Created an emergency kit				
4. Made an emergency plan				
5. Practised emergency plan				
6. Prepared house				
7. Have the contact details of my neighbours				

8. Other (please list):

I. Assistance needed (please circle)

1. Are you likely to require help from outside your household to prepare or leave your home in an emergency? Yes No

2. Who is most likely to provide it? Neighbour Family Friend No one

3. Do you think you are likely to be able to provide help to others such as neighbours in an emergency situation where your household is also under threat? Yes No

J Beliefs about handling emergencies

1. In the event of a bush fire that effected your family which one of the following statements best represents your belief? (please tick only one box below)

- ☐ I can handle any situations that arise without any preparation
- ☐ Preparation and planning I have in place will help me handle the situation
- ☐ Nothing I do to prepare will help me handle the situation
- ☐ I have never thought about it until now, so I don't have a belief yet

K Preparedness activities (please tick)

1. What types of preparedness activities would you be interested in participating in:

- ☐ 2 hour face to face workshop ☐ Help to prepare a plan
- ☐ Meet your street bbq ☐ Activity through a group you are involved in
- ☐ Online education program ☐ None

Other idea:

2. What time of day would you be able to attend an activity (please circle ALL that apply)?

Weekday Evening Weekend

PROGRAM NAME: Bushfire Preparedness Survey

Thank you for coming. We are surveying people to see how prepared they are for the coming Fire Season.

1. Your village/suburb _____ 2. Your street _____

3. Your Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Transgender/Intersex

4. Your Age: <34 ☐ 35-49 ☐ 50-64 ☐ 65-74 ☐ 75-84 ☐ 85+ ☐

5. Your current living arrangements are best described as living with:

Partner ☐ Partner and Children ☐ Single parent ☐ Parents ☐ Others ☐ Alone ☐

6. Do you have an illness or disability that limits your everyday activities? ☐ Yes ☐ No

7. How close to bushland do you live?

Back onto bush ☐ Across the street ☐ Next street ☐ 2 or more streets away ☐

8. Which of the following actions have you taken or plan to take? What preparedness measures do you already have in place? What measures do you plan to do?

Action	Now In Place	Plan to do	Haven't thought about it	Not important
Talked about a plan to leave early				
Talked about a plan to stay and defend my house				
Made plans to leave early				
Planned for a bushfire event where it was not possible to leave my area				
Planned for a bushfire event where it was not possible to leave my house				
Practised emergency plans				
Discussed emergency plans with my children				
Created an emergency kit				
Prepared my house and grounds				
Thought about how to deal with my pets in a bushfire emergency				
Have the contact details of people in my street				
Other (please list)				

9. Do you require help to prepare plans for bushfires or other emergencies? ☐ Yes ☐ No

10. Do you work out of the _____ area? ☐ Yes ☐ No No. days week _____

11. How many neighbours do you have contact with on a daily, weekly or monthly basis (eg talk in the street):

Daily _____ Weekly _____ Monthly _____

12. Do you have access to a motor vehicle at all times? ☐ Yes ☐ No

13. Which of the following best describes your situation in an emergency:

Please tick one

My plan is to leave early	
My plan is to stay and defend	
I will wait and see what happens before deciding	
I would need help and I don't know who would help me	

14. Did you meet new people from your street or neighbourhood at _____? Yes No

15. What was most useful to you about the event?

16. I am prepared to be a facilitator for my street and to be contacted for training opportunities ☐

and/or a follow up survey and/or short interview ☐

FOLLOW UP INSTRUMENT

We are following up with those who attended a to find out what planning and actions for emergency preparedness resulted from the BBQ.

1. Suburb/Village:	2. Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Transgender/Intersex <input type="checkbox"/>
3. Age group: <34 <input type="checkbox"/> 35-50 <input type="checkbox"/> 50-69 <input type="checkbox"/> 70-84 <input type="checkbox"/> 85+ <input type="checkbox"/>	
4. Do you identify as Indigenous or Torres Strait Island? <input type="checkbox"/> (Tick if Yes)	
5. Current living arrangements are best described as living with: Partner <input type="checkbox"/>	
Partner and Children <input type="checkbox"/> Single parent <input type="checkbox"/> Parents <input type="checkbox"/> Others <input type="checkbox"/> Alone <input type="checkbox"/>	
6. How close to the bush do you live (please circle one)? Back onto bush <input type="checkbox"/>	
Across the street <input type="checkbox"/> Next street <input type="checkbox"/> 2 or more streets away <input type="checkbox"/> In town <input type="checkbox"/>	

7. Where and when did you attend Meet Your Street?

8. Did you attend with other members of your household? Yes No Spouse/partner ☐ Children ☐

9. Besides the have you attended any other emergency preparedness workshops or seminars?
Yes No

If yes, please tick or state the name of the workshop or seminar

Please tick all that apply

Attended More than a fire plan workshop	
Attended screening of Fire stories film	
Spoke to RFS or other emergency service	

Other: _____

10. Thinking about the ... event, what preparedness measures did you already have in place, do you now have in place and what measures are you planning as a result of the BBQ?

Action	Previously in place	Now In Place	Plan to do
Talked about a plan to leave early			
Talked about a plan to stay and defend			
Planned for an event where it was not possible to leave my area			
Created an emergency kit			
Planned for an event where it was not possible to leave my house			
Practised emergency plans			
Prepared house			
Have the contact details of people in my street			

11. Since attending the have any of the following occurred (please tick all that apply):

	Yes	No
Conversations in your street about emergency situations		
Conversations with particular neighbours about emergency situations		
Conversations with others outside your area about emergency situations		
Conversations with other friends and family members not living with you about emergency situations		
Any further street gatherings		

12. How likely are you to prepare your house for the bush fire season. Please tick one box.

Very unlikely	Quite unlikely	Quite likely	Very likely

Reasons for your answer:

13. How confident do you feel about the following (please rate between 1 and 5)?

	Not at all confident			Very confident	
How confident do you feel about:	1	2	3	4	5
Defending your house in an emergency such as a bushfire that was effecting your area					
Staying in your house during a natural disaster resulting in power loss and closed roads in your area					
Sheltering in your house in a bushfire if there is no time to leave					
Leaving the area in an emergency such as a bushfire that effected your area					

14. How would you rate how you feel about facing an emergency such as bushfire?

1	2	3	4	5
---	---	---	---	---

Very anxious

Cautious

Very calm

15. Which of the following best describes your situation in an emergency:

Need for help	Please tick one
I wouldn't need help, I could evacuate myself	
People living in my home with me would help me	
My neighbours would help me	
Family or friends would help me	
Emergency services/civil defence would help me	
Someone from a community organisation would help me	
I don't know who would help me	

16. Are there any other actions you have taken as a result of the Meet Your Street BBQ?

17. Do you have any concerns about managing in an emergency that you would like to mention?

18. What has been most influential in helping you with emergency preparations?

19. Have you thought about the following	Yes	No
Whether you would stay and fight or leave?		
How you would leave?		
What you would do if staying?		
What to do if a fire happens and you are not at home?		
How to manage children?		
How to manage pets?		
What to do about valuables?		
Where you would go if you leave?		
What you would take with you?		
How far away you would go?		
How long you would plan to be away?		
What you would need in the house if you had to stay?		
Where the safer places near you are located?		

Blue Mountains Community Action Framework

Your name: _____ Your organisation: _____

Sheet 1: One Perfect Day	Community Connections
What are the highest priority issues for your organisation on a day to day basis? e.g. core mission, funding	
What capabilities and assets can your organisation bring to the table to help community members? e.g. resources & skills other strengths?	
What capabilities and assets can your organisation bring to the table to help other community organisations? I.e. what are your points of connection on an 'ordinary day'? E.G. combined meetings, collaborations on program delivery	

Additional thoughts and comments:

Blue Mountains Community Action Framework

Your name: _____ Your organisation: _____

Sheet 2: A DISASTER ON THE WAY	Community Connections You have 12 hours lead-in, what is it you need to do?
What are the highest priority issues for your organisation in an emergency? e.g. evacuation, communications, staff safety, other?	
What capabilities and assets can your organisation bring to the table to help community members in an emergency situation? e.g. resources & skills, other strengths?	
What capabilities and assets can your organisation bring to the table to help other community organisations in an emergency? What information will you need? Where will you source it from? Who could help? What organisational connections must you have or need to make?	

Additional thoughts and comments:

SHEET 3: COMMUNICATIONS

Blue Mountains Community Action Framework

Your name: _____ Your organisation: _____

Sheet 3: Communications	Community Connections Think specifically about the communications challenges that your organisation, and you as an organisational member, may face. At this stage we are assuming you will have the usual communication tools such as emails & internet, mobiles, landlines, and television broadcasts.
Connecting with and providing updates to other community organisations and first responders Which other organisations? Best way to communicate? Other?	
Distributing critical information to affected community members What information will you need? Do you have it already? Where will it come from? Other?	
Communicating with family and friends from outside the affected area Record keeping? Best way to communicate? Other?	
Additional thoughts and comments:	

Blue Mountains Community Action Framework

Your name: _____ Your organisation: _____

Sheet 4: Relocation & business continuity	Community Connections
What are the highest priority issues for your organisation when considering your own relocation?	
What capabilities and assets does your organisation have to assist another community organisation who needs to relocate?	

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