



Mountains Outreach  
Community Service

## **Family Connections Preparedness Project 2015**

**Supporting preparedness and fire plan  
development for families with young children**

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Mountains Support

Mountains Outreach Community Service  
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# Mountains Outreach Community Service Family Connections Preparedness Project 2015

## Executive Summary

Mountains Outreach Community Service received funding from NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet under the Blue Mountains Flexible Community Grants Program to deliver the Family Connections Preparedness Project.

The project has successfully reached out to over 100 families in the mid and upper mountains and given them opportunities to consider and discuss their preparations for bush fire emergencies and to develop plans. A survey completed by 123 individuals indicated the level of connectedness of most families and the vulnerability of some. It also indicated that an event local to their areas was most likely to appeal to them. Interviews and focus groups held with 17 parents through play groups indicated that many had planned for leaving the mountains in an emergency but few were prepared for having to shelter in place if they were unable to leave.

Only 24 per cent said they had practiced emergency plans and 34 per cent had planned for an event where it was not possible to leave the house or thought about pets. Forty four per cent said they had the contact details of neighbours and 43 per cent that they had created an emergency kit.

In interviews and one focus group the majority talked about leaving at the first possible signs of danger because of their young children. Some said their husbands would stay and defend and one of the fathers interviewed said he would defend the house sending his wife and children away.

The major issue mentioned was fire, with road access and loss of power the next most important issues. People were concerned about being able to get out of their street or their area and off the mountains in times of emergency. They were well aware that there was one main exit road and in some areas even getting to the highway there may only be one route.

In almost all cases people had plans to leave the area as soon as an issue emerged that could effect them and their children. This often meant leaving the mountains to go to Sydney and for a few, heading west. With the concern about fire many mentioned preparing houses and properties, access to water and smoke as concerns. Taking children out of the potential harm of smoke was a dominating concern, not just the fire itself.

While most had thought a lot about leaving and what to take with them not many seemed to have a good idea of what to do if they were unable to leave. Some suggested getting out into the open on a road or park or oval, others thought going under the house might be a good idea.

Many were happy that they could have the Fires Near Me app feeling that would give them more information.

Families were brought together through Meet Your Street local BBQ events

where they were able to meet others from their street or area. People were prompted to consider their preparedness through a survey provided by a community worker. The survey was a good tool for guiding conversations about preparedness. Eighty three surveys were completed and they indicated that around 50 per cent had considered most emergency contingencies. While 74 per cent said they had talked about a plan to leave early, less than 50 per cent said they had the other items in place, except for preparing house and grounds which 56 per cent said they had in place.

People who completed surveys were from all parts of the areas with 28 per cent saying they lived on the bush and 16 per cent across the road, 22 per cent lived in the next street and 34 per cent two or more streets away. In all 56 per cent were not located directly near bush land. Forty three per cent of those attending said they had met new people and 85 per cent said they would like to see more connections in their area.

In commenting on the event, thirteen mentioned gaining information, six community connection and kids activities and ten commented on 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.

There were four mentions of trees – removal and help with cutting down and the AIDA 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.

Those who attended the preparedness workshops found the "15 minute to impact" scenario the most useful part of the workshop with eleven mentioning it specifically. Three said all of it was useful. Other mentions included brainstorming, making a list of what to take, and information.

Community organisations with their local connection to communities provide vital opportunities for connecting people within their communities. Assisting people to make connections in their areas is an important function of programs run by community organisations. Almost half those surveyed said they met new people in the Meet Your Street and 85 per cent were keen to see more opportunities for connection in their area. Connections contribute to community resilience where they enable positive interaction.

Individual households may not be in a position in some areas to provide or facilitate connections within their immediate communities and may require assistance to increase their social capital. Assistance in times of emergency is required beyond the neighbourhood in some circumstances such as bushfire where everyone is facing the same situation. With other issues such as power outages local communities could provide vital services to those who are known to lack resources though these too may require resources beyond the immediate local level. Discrimination can also lead people to be excluded on a local community level and requiring assistance beyond the neighbourhood level.

## **Main components of the Meet Your Street model**

### **Meet Your Street Model**

**Events held in accessible locations primarily local parks**

**Promote locally using banners and letterbox drops in targeted areas**

**Survey as an engagement and discussion tool**

**Partner with Rural Fire Service to draw on their resources, information and expertise – trucks, planning**

**Hold simple barbecue with children's activities to engage families in local areas**

**Promote other opportunities for developing plans such as workshops and seminars**

## Recommendations

1. Continue with this successful model pairing community organisations with Rural Fire Service to run preparedness activities. Meet Your Street is successful because it is for everyone in the neighbourhood regardless of socio-economic position and can serve a leveling purpose providing common ground for the neighbourhood.

2. Build on the partnership with RFS enabling them to be more involved in talking to people and using the survey as a tool to start the conversation. This may involve some further training for volunteers. A checklist/recording tool could be developed for RFS who are attending the event (and not administering the survey) to chart topics of conversations they have with community members about preparedness etc plus skilling in how to have these conversations so they are engaging and informal and non-judgemental,

3. Further review and develop children's resources for the Australian context for parents and children in different age groups based on US and other resources. In particular, guides for parents on how to have conversations with children about emergency situations and what to expect in specific circumstances relevant to the family.

Resources for teenagers and for having conversations with teenagers are required. There are activities they can be involved in if they know more about specific emergency situations.

Resources for schools are plentiful and could be implemented in the classroom. Develop resources for workshop and place interactive and photographic material online on RFS website.

4. Consistency and frequency needed in offering preparedness programs as this gives them validity as something that happens on a regular basis until it becomes common practice like wearing a seat belt.

5. Consideration to how single parents who commonly need assistance with property and plan preparations could be assisted. Single parents surveyed were less likely to have prepared their properties for bushfire. Issues were raised about removal of trees and rubbish.

6. Clarification and promotion of responsibilities of owners and tenants of rental properties regarding yard maintenance. Produce guidelines about maintenance of rental properties in bushfire zones.

7. Consideration be given as to how to involve men more in local issues such as bushfire and emergency planning. In the MOCS Community Connections survey men reported levels of social cohesion five per cent lower than women, and levels of community participation and network communications three per cent lower. Men were less likely to attend events such as Meet your Street and other programs on preparedness.



8. Engage with families where a child or parent has a chronic condition or other disadvantage to assist them in developing a plan.  
Some additional resources be provided to organisations such as Mountains Outreach Community Service to provide individualised support to develop a plan where needed with existing clients. An agreement with local health services and with schools to refer people in this situation could mean further outreach.
9. Incorporate or use other forums to address the needs and concerns of pet owners.
10. Plans for leaving were quite common as a result of 2013 fires and these need to be revived and reviewed in the absence of fires in future years. Ongoing programs are needed to assist with this.
11. The importance of collecting data from surveys needs to be emphasised as it gives an indication of who is attending events – age groups, gender, levels of preparedness and attitudes to preparedness. If data is gathered on a yearly basis it can indicate improvements in community preparedness.
12. Promote links to emergency kit contents through various media – RFS etc. Many people did not know what was in an emergency kit and did not have one. RFS Bushfire Survival Plan p.15.
13. Practicing an emergency plan was uncommon – some thought about what people should practice may need to be put into promoting for example getting in the car with everything the kids and parents need, pets etc., with a yearly reminder in September such as with smoke alarm batteries.
14. Planning for transport for women at home with children and others with no access to a vehicle needs to be considered as contacts may not be able to come in from outside the area except where warnings are able to be issued in plenty of time and transport options are limited.

## Introduction

The project funded by Blue Mountains Flexible Community Grants Program had four stages – the first two stages were data gathering through surveys and interviews and the third and fourth stages consisted of providing preparedness events for parents to attend.

The project employed a community action research a education approach working with over 100 families with young children through playgroups, early childhood services, out of school hours services, with a particular focus on families with vulnerabilities, to identify and understand their needs and concerns in preparing for emergencies as well as their existing strengths in managing challenging situations. Families were asked how they could best be supported to develop an emergency plan and the support approaches identified were then provided in the second phase of the project addressing the issues identified in the process. This tailored education and support strategy informed by information collected in the participatory action model included key components of the local 'More than a fire plan' and 'Meet Your Street' community engagement programs. These were delivered to parents in places where they already meet such as local parks and facilities, playgroups, early childhood centres.

Research has shown that families with young children have additional stresses in preparing their family to manage an emergency. Informal research at our existing playgroups indicated that parents really valued the 10 minute drop-in session provided by RFS and Red Cross in July 2014 and wanted to participate in a more detailed session with childcare. We also found that they had unrealistic expectations of the capacity of the emergency services to look after and direct them in the event of a fire emergency. They feel overwhelmed by their own ability to develop a fire plan which is why a strengths based approach which identifies their existing abilities in coping with challenging situations is important. There is also clear evidence that people do not write down their fire plans, do not practice them and do not have plans for multiple scenarios. This work targets the most vulnerable families and the outcome of the project is a transferable model for this target group.

The research component enabled the exploration of both the needs and concerns of families in all hazard situations as well as enabling self identification of family strengths, existing support mechanisms and community connection and capabilities. The activities assisted families to come together and support each other to develop bush fire preparedness plans and this helps people feel prepared and empowered to face the prospect of another fire season in the Blue Mountains.

There were essentially four phases to the project. The first phase involved development of a family survey based on the Community Connections survey. The survey was distributed through childcare centres and playgroups between Hazelbrook and Katoomba and a total of 123 were returned.

The second phase consisted on short interviews with parents at playgroups to determine their understanding and level of preparedness for disaster such as bush fire. Interviews were held at three playgroups in the mountains. One at Blackheath and two at separate groups in Hazelbrook. There were 12 interviews with nine mothers and three fathers. In addition a focus group was held at Lawson Public School after school hours while children of parents attending were in a dance class.

In phase three results from analysis of the surveys and interviews were used to determine the best approach for reaching parents and families and assisting them with their fire preparedness. It was clear that Meet Your Street events were going to appeal to this demographic more than a seminar. It was also apparent that many had thought about and made plans for leaving the area but very few had plans for sheltering in place if they were unable to leave.

Four Meet Your Street events were held in September/October 2015 and most attendees were locals to each of the areas. In total there were 124 adults who completed 83 surveys, and 133 children attending. Resources for children were reviewed and a resource with links was prepared and distributed.

Following on from these events in phase four, three preparedness workshops were held in October 2015, one each in Wentworth Falls, Lawson and Hazelbrook. In total there were 22 attendees.

# 1. Family Connections Preparedness Survey 2015

## Summary of Community Connections Survey

In the first phase a survey was developed based on the Community Connections survey used with a broader sample from the Blue Mountains. The survey was modified to make it particular to families with questions about volunteer activities related to children and taking into account single parents and parents and/or children with chronic conditions.

The survey was distributed through childcare centres and playgroups between Hazelbrook and Katoomba. A total of 123 were returned. The majority of responses, were from Hazelbrook, Lawson and Katoomba. Overall more responses were received from people who live in locations close to bush land. The dominant age group was 35-49 years with 73 followed by <34 years with 38 in this age group.

The dominant living arrangement was partner and children with 91 or 62 per cent in this category. There were 27 single parents, 23 per cent of the sample and one grandparent and children and one carer/guardian and children. There were a total of 253 children amongst those returning the survey, 120 in the 0-4 age group and 136 in the 5-11 age group. Three single parents had children in the 0-4 age group only, 12 in the 5-11 year age group only and 12 had children in both age groups.

Eight reported having a chronic condition that limited their daily activities and 11 reported having children who had a chronic condition. The majority, 96 per cent of respondents, reported attending local festivals or other community activities. Involvement varied for the different activities and showed less involvement in non child related volunteer activities than in child related ones. It is also apparent that those with young children are less involved in all activities except out of school activities.

There appears to be a great deal of exchange between families in helping each other out with various activities. Thirty nine per cent said they required assistance with family activities, such as car pooling, child minding, preparing meals and 62 per cent said that they provided such assistance to others.

Most said those who helped were primarily family, 58 per cent, and 33 per cent said friends. Only nine per cent nominated neighbours.

The majority had contact with others on a weekly basis though almost a third saw friends and chatted at child related activities on a daily basis.

On the measure of social cohesion it was found that a high percentage of respondents felt safe in their neighbourhood with positive responses at 78 per cent, able to access information at 72 per cent, that the neighbourhood is friendly at 65 per cent and that the neighbourhood is clean and tidy at 62 per cent. The lowest rating was for 'support is available' at 38 per cent positive responses. Neighbours help had 47 per cent positive responses and feeling connected to the neighbourhood 49 per cent positive responses.

## Detailed Community Connections Survey Results

The survey was distributed through child care centres and play groups between Hazelbrook and Katoomba.

A total of 123 were returned with 114 complete. Eighteen were completed on Survey Monkey and 105 by hard copy.

There were 27 respondents who had children in the 0-4 only age group, 36 with children in the 5-11 only age group and 53 with children in both age groups.

More responses were received from people who live in locations close to bush land. Only 11 per cent said they lived two or more streets away from the bush.

The survey contained three scales – community participation, network connection and social cohesion. The effect of community participation and network connection on social cohesion in the survey results has been investigated statistically.

Overall results from statistical analysis:

- Gender of the respondent is not a significant factor for social cohesion for households
- There does not appear to be any difference in social cohesion between households that live in the mid mountains, Katoomba or other areas
- While single parents on average have social cohesion indices 0.040 lower than those of couples with children, this is not statistically significant (= data is highly variable).
- The number of children in either age group does not affect social cohesion for households
- The respondent having a chronic condition reduced the social cohesion index by an average of 0.167
- Having a child with a chronic condition does reduce the social cohesion index on average, but the coefficient is not statistically significant.

Comparing these results with those for individuals, there are some differences:

- While gender is not a significant factor for social cohesion for households, it has a significant direct effect in the survey of individuals with men reporting lower levels of social capital than women across all three indices. On average, men reported levels of social cohesion five per cent lower than women, and levels of community participation and network communications three per cent lower.
- The respondent having a chronic condition affects perceptions of social cohesion directly in a household, while the effect is through community participation in the individual survey

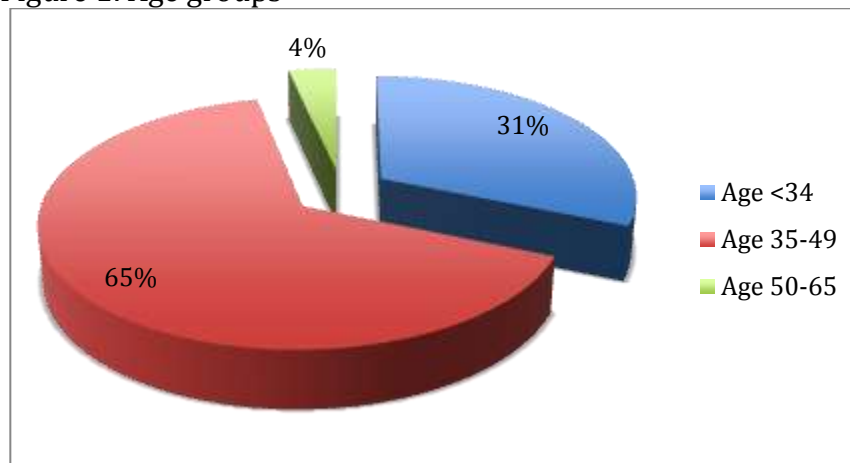
### Gender

The survey was completed by 99 females and 18 males. One respondent gave gender as 'other' and one did not give gender. All single parents were female. Those with children in the 5-11 year age group only had the highest proportion of male respondents to the survey with eight responses.

## Age groups

The dominant age group was the 35-49 year age group with 75 followed by the <34 years age group with 38 in this age group. Four were in the 50-64 age group. For single parents the dominant age group was 35-49 years. There were 20 single parents in that age group, six in the <34 year age group and one in the 50-65 year age group.

Figure 1: Age groups



Those with children in the 0-4 age group 70 per cent were in the <34 years age group and 30 per cent in the 35-49 years age group. For those with children 5-11 years only 81 per cent were in the 35-49 year age group and 16 per cent in the <34 year age group with five per cent in the 50-64 year age group. For those with children in both age groups 68 per cent were in the 35-49 year age group, 28 per cent in the <34 year age group and 4 per cent in the 50-64 year age group.

Children age groups	n	%
0-4 only	23	20.4
5-12 only	34	30.1
0-4 and 5-12	50	44.2
No children	6	5.3
Total	113	100.0

## Indigenous status

Six people who returned the survey identified as Aboriginal. All were female, four aged under 50 and two over 50 years. Three were single parents, one was a grandparent with two children, one in each age group and one was a carer/guardian with four children, three aged 0-4 years. One reported having difficulty speaking English. None nominated having a chronic condition or a child with a chronic condition. Two said that they required assistance with family activities, such as car pooling, child-minding, preparing meals and three that they provide assistance to others. Five had children in both age groups and one had a child aged 5-11 years.

## Postcode

Most of the surveys were returned from the mid mountains as can be seen in Table 1. Single parents were predominantly from Katoomba and Lawson. Lower mountains surveys were excluded from statistical analysis as there were so few.

Table 1: Postcodes and parent status – partner and children or single parent

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Single parents</b>
	<b>%</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Hazelbrook</b>	38	7
<b>Katoomba</b>	28	41
<b>Lawson</b>	25	26
<b>Wentworth Falls</b>	7	11

## Living arrangements

The dominant living arrangement was partner and children with 89 in this situation.

A total of 256 children were recorded in the returned surveys. In the 0-4 age group there were 120 and in the 5-11 age group there were 136.

There were 27 single parents, 24 per cent of the sample and one grandparent and children and one carer/guardian and children.

Three single parents had children in the 0-4 age group only, 12 in the 5-11 year age group only and 12 had children in both age groups.

## Difficulty speaking English

Ten respondents reported having difficulty speaking English. One was a single parent with one child in the 5-11 year age group. One had two children in the 0-4 age group, six had between two and four children in both age groups and three had between one and two children in the 5-11 year age group.

## Chronic condition

Nine reported having a chronic condition that limited their daily activities. Two had two children each under 4 years of age, five had one or two children aged between 5 and 11 years and two had one child in each age group.

Eleven reported having children who had a chronic condition. Two were in the 0-4 year age group, three in the 5-11 year age group and six of those with a child with a chronic condition had two to three children in both age groups.

Three of those who said they had a child with a chronic condition also reported having a chronic condition themselves.

## Community involvement

The majority, 96 per cent of respondents, reported attending local festivals or other community activities. Involvement varied for the different activities and showed less involvement in non child related volunteer activities than in child related ones. It is also apparent that those with young children are less involved

in all activities except out of school activities.

Table 2: Community involvement

	Yes %	Child 0-4 years only	Child 5-11 years only	Children in both age groups	No response
<b>B1 Attend festivals</b>	96	93	92	98	3.4
<b>B2 Volunteer – child related</b>	69	30	79	81	2.6
<b>B3 Volunteer – non child related</b>	20	11	29	17	4.3
<b>B4 Go out at least monthly</b>	64	63	74	57	4.3
<b>B5 Out of school activities</b>	82	67	82	89	3.4
<b>B6 Share Meal</b>	79	78	84	75	3.4

### Require assistance

Thirty eight per cent said they required assistance with family activities, such as car pooling, child-minding, preparing meals and 59 per cent said that they provided such assistance to others. Eight of those who said they required assistance had children in the 0-4 year age group only, 15 had children in the 5-11 year age group only and 20 had children in both groups. People with children in the 0-4 age group only were less likely to say they provided assistance to others (30 per cent) while 66 per cent of those with children in the older age groups said they did provide assistance.

### Help provided

Respondents were asked who was most likely to provide help if needed. Only 86 responded to the question, or 73 per cent. For most, 58 per cent of those who responded, family is most likely to provide help, followed by friends for 33 per cent and only 9 per cent nominated a neighbour.

It appears that proportionately single parents are more likely to rely on friends and neighbours as indicated in Table 3. Table 4 indicates that for those with children under 0-4 years only there is more reliance on family than friends or neighbours.

Table 3: Help by whole sample and single parents

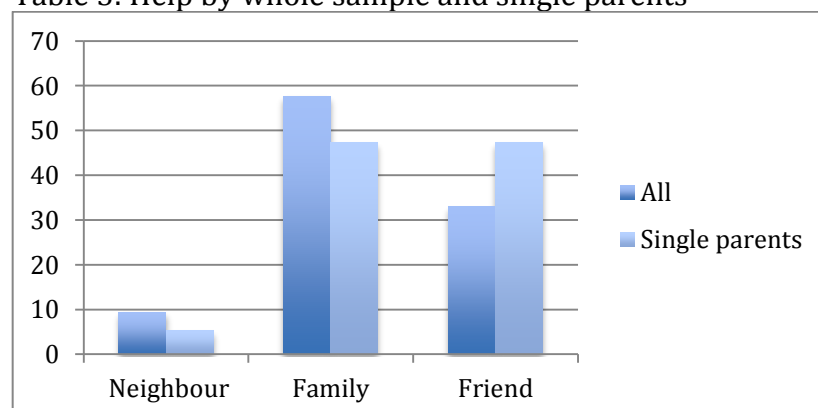
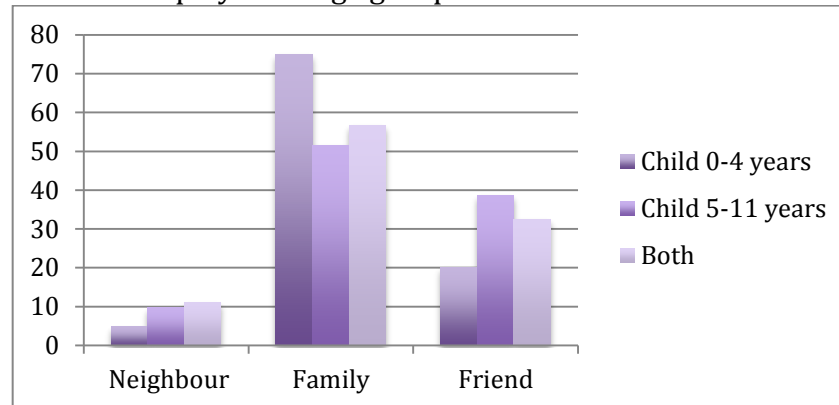




Table 4: Help by child age groups



### Contact with others

The majority had contact with others on a weekly basis though almost a third saw friends and chat at child related activities on a daily basis. Twenty per cent saw family members daily and 18 per cent chatted while shopping on a daily basis. Between seven and eight per cent said they saw family members yearly or never, talked in the street yearly or never and chatted while shopping yearly or never.

Table 5: Contact with others

	Daily per cent	Weekly per cent	Monthly per cent	Yearly per cent	Never per cent	No response per cent
D1 Family members	20	47	26	7	1	0
D2 Friends	29	55	15	0	0	6
D3 Attend social events	6	48	41	5	0	0.9
D4 Talk in the street	20	55	18	4	3	0.9
D5 Chat while shopping	18	56	18	4	4	2.6
D5 Chat child activities	28	63	7	0	2	1.8

### Social cohesion

A high percentage of respondents feel safe with positive responses at 78 per cent, able to access information at 72 per cent, that the neighbourhood is friendly at 65 per cent and that the neighbourhood is clean and tidy at 62 per cent. The lowest rating was support is available at 38 per cent positive responses. Neighbours help had 47 per cent positive responses and feeling connected to the neighbourhood 49 per cent positive responses.

The highest negative rating was for neighbours help with 25 per cent giving a negative rating and 29 per cent a neutral rating. For feeling support is available

49 per cent were neutral and 19 per cent negative and for feeling connected to the neighbourhood 38 per cent were neutral and 13 per cent negative.

Table 6: Social cohesion items

%	Connected to neigh'hood	Neighbours help	Clean and tidy	Friendly	Support	Safe	Access info
<b>Positive</b>	49	47	62	65	38	78	72
<b>Neutral</b>	38	29	28	31	42	19	25
<b>Negative</b>	13	25	10	4	19	3	3

## Work

There were 34 who said they worked more than 20 kms from home and 81 said they do not work more than 20 kms from home. The average number of days worked was three for the 101 responses given.

Table 7: Number of days worked

Days	n
6	6
5	16
4	16
3	19
2	18
1	15
0	11

## Motor vehicle access

On the question of access to a motor vehicle – 88 per cent said yes, four did not respond to the question and 13 said they do not have access to a motor vehicle all the time.

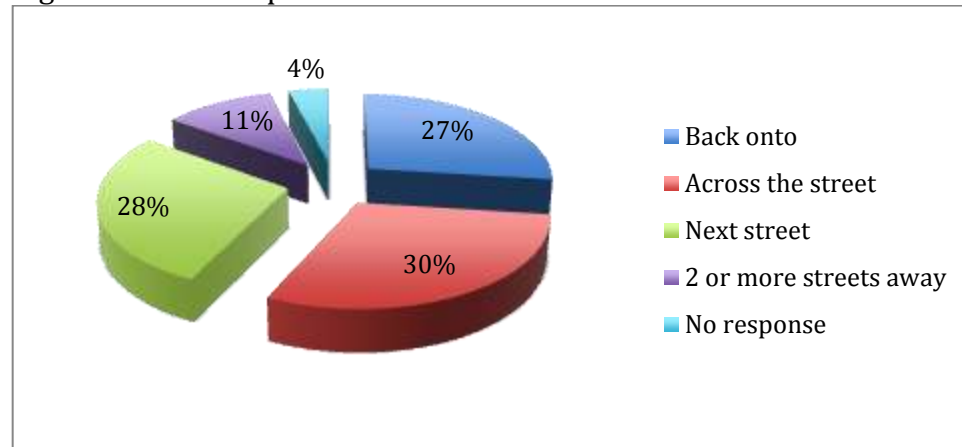
## Location to bush land

Most respondents lived close to bush land with 31 saying they back on to the bush, 34 that they live a cross the street from bush land and 32 that they live in the next street from bush land. Only 13 respondents lived two or more streets away from bush land.

Table 8: Location to bush land

Location to bush	Back onto	Across the street	Next street	2 or more streets away	No response
%	27	30	28	11	4

Figure 2: Location percent



## Preparation

### Emergency situations

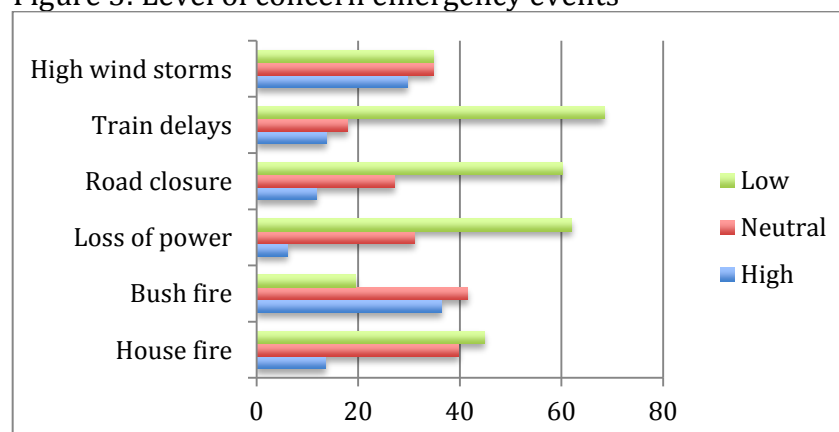
Respondents were asked to rate particular emergency situations by how important they considered them to be on a scale of 1-5 where 5 is highly important and 1 is low importance. The issue that rated most highly for importance was bush fire with 36 per cent rating it at 4 or 5 followed by high wind and storms for which 30 per cent gave a high rating. The lowest rating was for train delays for 68 per cent who possibly do not use the train and therefore are not affected by it.

House fires were rated low for 45 per cent. Many were neutral for house fires and bush fire with 40 per cent and 42 per cent respectively giving a rating of 3. Considering 68 said they lived on or across the street from the bush and 32 that they lived within one street of the bush this is perhaps concerning.

Table 9: Level of concern re emergency events

Level of concern	House fire	Bush fire	Loss of power	Road closure	Train delays	High wind storms
Low %	45	19	62	60	68	35
Neutral %	40	42	31	27	18	35
High %	14	36	6	12	14	30

Figure 3: Level of concern emergency events



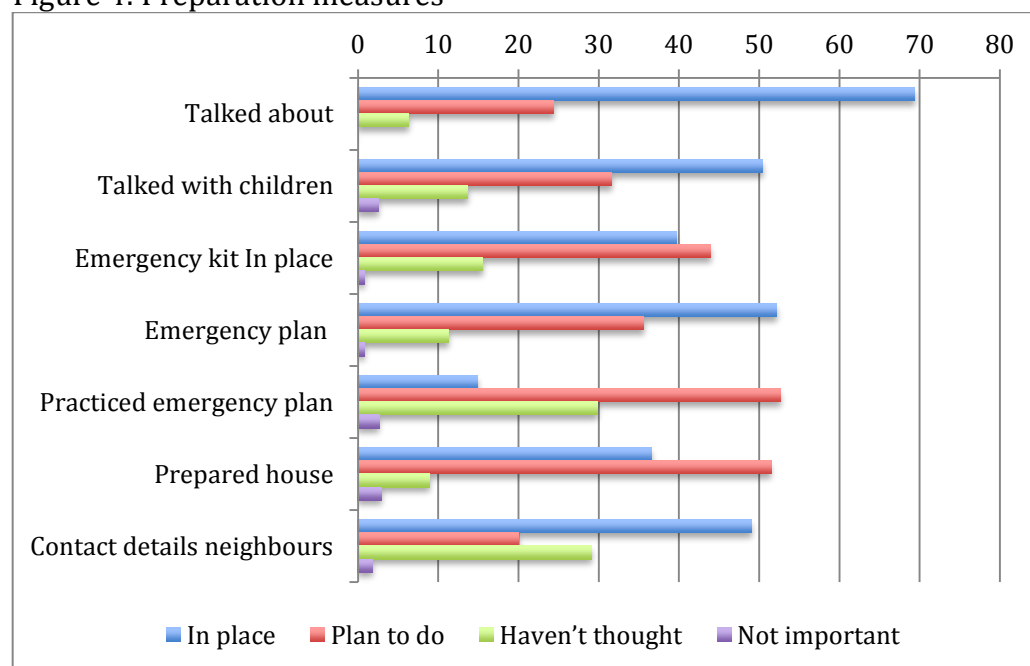
### Preparation and planning

The majority, 69 per cent, said they had talked about what they would do in an emergency and 24 per cent that they planned to do this with only 6 per cent saying they had not thought about it. The least responses received was for the question on house preparation. Very few, three percent or less said that any of the measures were not important. The question where the highest number said not important was in relation to house preparation which also had the second highest score for 'plan to do' and the second lowest score for 'in place'. It is unclear whether this could mean that leaving was regarded as more important as people were the priority and property less so or that people were not inclined to prepare their properties.

Table 10: Preparation measures (per cent)

H1 Preparation measures %	In place	Plan to do	Haven't thought	Not important	Number of responses
Talked about	69.4	24.3	6.3	0.0	111
Talked with children	50.4	31.6	13.7	2.6	115
Emergency kit In place	39.7	44.0	15.5	0.9	116
Emergency plan	52.2	35.7	11.3	0.9	115
Practiced emergency plan	14.9	52.6	29.8	2.6	114
Prepared house	36.6	51.5	8.9	3.0	101
Contact details neighbours	49.1	20.0	29.1	1.8	110

Figure 4: Preparation measures



There were few differences between groups by age of children or location on preparation measures except on house preparation. None of those who lived backing on to bush land said the preparation measure mentioned were not

important apart from preparing the house for which 3 per cent said it was not important. Twelve per cent said talking with children was not important – seven per cent of these had children 0-4 years only and seven per cent lived two or more streets away from bush land. Five per cent who said not important to house preparation lived across the road from bush land and 3 per cent of the those with children in the 5-11 year age groups said it was not important.

### Preparation and living circumstances

Table 11: Preparation and living circumstances

Preparation measures		Living spouse/partner and children		Single parent	
		Count	%	Count	%
H1 Talked about plans	In place	61	73.5%	12	54.5%
	Plan to do	18	21.7%	8	36.4%
	Haven't thought	4	4.8%	2	9.1%
	Total	83	100.0%	22	100.0%
H2 Talked with children	In place	40	49.4%	16	59.3%
	Plan to do	26	32.1%	8	29.6%
	Haven't thought	12	14.8%	3	11.1%
	Not important	3	3.7%	0	0.0%
	Total	81	100.0%	27	100.0%
H3 Emergency kit	In place	33	40.7%	8	29.6%
	Plan to do	33	40.7%	16	59.3%
	Haven't thought	14	17.3%	3	11.1%
	Not important	1	1.2%	0	0.0%
	Total	81	100.0%	27	100.0%
H4 Emergency plan	In place	45	55.6%	12	44.4%
	Plan to do	26	32.1%	12	44.4%
	Haven't thought	9	11.1%	3	11.1%
	Not important	1	1.2%	0	0.0%
	Total	81	100.0%	27	100.0%
H5 Practiced emergency plan	In place	11	13.4%	4	15.4%
	Plan to do	45	54.9%	13	50.0%
	Haven't thought	23	28.0%	9	34.6%
	Not important	3	3.7%	0	0.0%
	Total	82	100.0%	26	100.0%
H6 Prepared house	In place	31	42.5%	4	19.0%
	Plan to do	33	45.2%	16	76.2%
	Haven't thought	6	8.2%	1	4.8%
	Not important	3	4.1%	0	0.0%
	Total	73	100.0%	21	100.0%
H7 Contact details neighbours	In place	46	56.8%	5	20.8%
	Plan to do	14	17.3%	7	29.2%
	Haven't thought	19	23.5%	12	50.0%
	Not important	2	2.5%	0	0.0%
	Total	81	100.0%	24	100.0%

It can be seen in Table 11 that single parents are less likely to be in a position of preparedness except on 'talked with children' where single parents are more likely to have done this than where both parents are present. Single parents are less likely to have prepared their house or have details of neighbours, less likely to have an emergency kit or emergency plan but slightly more likely to have practiced an emergency plan. though a higher proportion also have not thought about it.

### Assistance required

There were 25 who said they would require assistance in an emergency and 88 that said they could provide assistance to others in an emergency. Six of those who said they required help had children in the 0-4 age group only, 10 in the 5-11 age group only and nine had children in both groups.

### Attitude to emergencies

#### J1 Handle emergencies

Most people consider that the preparation and planning they have in place is enough to help them handle a natural disaster situation. Eight per cent responded that they could handle a natural disaster without any preparation, 75 per cent considered the preparation and planning they had in place would help them handle the situation, 8 per cent responded with 'nothing I do will help me handle the situation, and 8 per cent said they had never thought about it.

Table 12: Attitude to emergencies

No preparation	Preparation and planning in place	Nothing will help	Never thought
8	75	8	8

### Preparation activities

The most popular potential activity was Meet Your Street with 62 per cent nominating it followed by help preparing a plan at 25 per cent, 2 hour face-to-face and online education at 23 per cent each and 21 per cent nominating an activity through a group they know. Fifteen per cent nominated no activity. Most nominated more than one activity with 196 responses overall.

Table 13: Preferred event

Activity	2 hour face to face	Meet street bbq	Online ed	Help prepare plan	Activity through known group	None
n	27	72	27	29	24	17
%	23	62	23	25	21	15

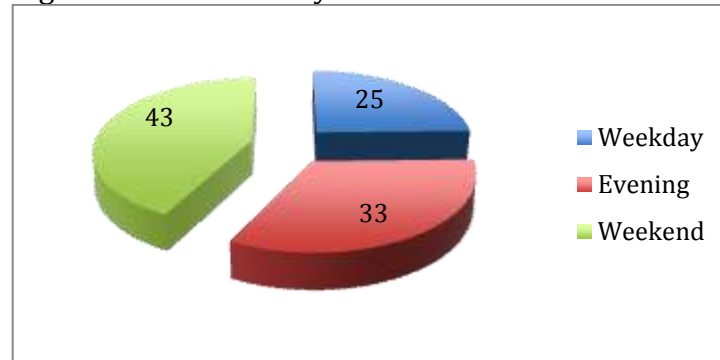
### Preferred days

There was a preference for weekend activities with 49 per cent nominating weekends, 38 per cent evenings and 28 per cent weekdays. A total of 134 responses indicates that a number nominated more than one option.

Table 14: Preferred days/times

	Weekday	Evening	Weekend
n	33	44	57
%	25	33	43

Figure 5: Preferred days



The survey helped to inform the next stage of the project with a clear indication that Meet Your Street BBQs would be the most appropriate type of event for this demographic. Events were held in accessible places for families and provided activities for children in a friendly atmosphere that was informative.

## 2. Family Connections Preparedness Interviews and Focus Groups

### Summary

Interviews were held at three playgroups in the mountains. One at Blackheath and two at separate groups in Hazelbrook. There were 12 interviews with nine mothers and three fathers. In addition a focus group was held at Lawson Public School after school hours with five mothers while their children were attending a dance class.

The majority talked about leaving at the first possible signs of danger because of their young children. Some said their husbands would stay and defend and one of the fathers interviewed said he would defend the house sending his wife and children away.

The major issue mentioned was fire, with road access and loss of power the next most important issues. People were concerned about being able to get out of their street or their area and off the mountains in times of emergency. They were well aware that there was one main exit road and in some areas even getting to the highway there may only be one route.

In almost all cases people had plans to leave the area as soon as an issue emerged that could effect them and their children. This often meant leaving the mountains to go to Sydney and for a few, heading west. With the concern about fire many mentioned preparing houses and properties, access to water and smoke as concerns. Taking children out of the potential harm of smoke was a dominating concern, not just the fire itself.

Preparation of houses was talked about by most who mentioned cleaning gutters, clearing vegetation away from the house and cutting back overhanging trees.

We just did what we had to do. Moved everything out of the yard that we could, filled up everything we could with water, made sure the gutters were filled with water and clean and did all the prepared stuff that you normally would do. Got the pump out, connected it, made sure the water cubes were full. What you can do really. Mowed the lawn, moved the plastic toys away from the house to the back corner of the yard. We've got kids climbing frames and all that stuff that had - so that sort of stuff that you can - that was about it really. (MOCSH2)

Those who were renting were mixed about how much they could do to prepare their house. For one it was a case of leave early because there was little she could do as the yard was not maintained whereas another said the owner had a gardener come to tidy up regularly.

Three specifically mentioned having water tanks and another that her neighbour had a tank. One had water cubes in the absence of a tank:

we don't have a water tank but we've got lots of water cubes. They're only about 1000 litres (HP2)

Other water storage referred to included bottled water and a bladder of water



under the house (BP2). A few talked about filling the gutters and other containers with water and some mentioned the possibility of loss of water pressure. Water was included in emergency kits where these were considered. Some mentioned loss of water pressure as a concern and limiting what they could do to look after their houses.

I mean we've cleaned the gutters and it's always kept tidy but there's not much you can - you know, no sprinklers or anything like that. The water gets all sucked out anyway so...you don't get any water. We haven't got a swimming pool or a pump so yeah, it's basically just make sure our insurances are right. (MOCSH1)

One interviewee was joining the RFS to get training and the husband of another had joined the RFS and helped out in some recent fires.

Access roads were mentioned by many and most thought about the time they would leave in 2013 to avoid everybody being on the road at the same time. Many were aware that even small roads could be cut off in a fire.

Like how would you be able to get out, you know, you definitely thought about it when Yellow Rock, like my God, you know, they couldn't get out. They were trapped down the end there. It would be a similar situation here. (MOCSGH2)

So what would be your biggest concern?

Getting out. So being able to get out because I mean you've got the one road really. Yeah, that would be the biggest concern is congestion of traffic. (MOCSH1)

People were also aware that the location of the fire would influence where they would go:

Oh look it depends where the fire was. Like if it was up here I'd probably go to my parent's place at Springwood which is on the other side which has burned through twice in the last [laughs] eight years so it should be alright. Or failing that I'd go to mum's in Sydney or wherever. So yeah, it just depends. I mean it depends on a lot of things. It depends on time and traffic and the time of day. If it's really late at night I might not want to drive down to the city, I might just drive to Springwood. Yeah, but I've certainly got plenty of options where you'd go. (MOCSH2)

What I do worry about in Lawson is what if there's a fire down and up, and there's nowhere to go? You can't go down to safety or up to safety. So I think the Mid Mountains Centre is meant to be our safety place. So as long as I can get to that... (MOCSL3)

While most had thought a lot about leaving and what to take with them not many seemed to have a good idea of what to do if they were unable to leave. Some suggested getting out into the open on a road or park or oval, others thought going under the house might be a good idea.

If I didn't have warning and I was home by myself and I opened the back door and there was fire I'd probably look for a fire truck to get out. But if not I suppose I'd try and bunker down under the house and cover us with

woollen blankets. I mean what else can you do? Seek shelter if it's right there. Seek shelter I guess. I would really like to have the warning to get out with my children. Certainly I would never intentionally keep my children at home with a fire imminent. I don't think that's very smart. (MOCSH2)

There was a sense that awareness was growing about bush fire preparation:

This is the third or the fourth time that we've had that invitation to come and meet with the RFS and make sure you've got the plan there and talk - meet people in the community that live close to you and talk about it and stuff. So it's definitely people are becoming aware. (MOCSGH2)

Many were also happy to have the Fires Near Me app. Further detail from each group is provided in the following pages.

## Lawson Focus Group

There were five participants in the Lawson focus group. Two were aged under 35 years and three over 35 years. All were female and two were single mothers. Two said where they lived backed onto bush and others said close to it. One did not drive.

Fire and storms were the main emergencies discussed. A car accident was also mentioned – if the parent were injured how prepared was the child for that.

In terms of being prepared what was considered most important was documents ready to go, being able to get out, medications for a diabetic child. Overall the plan with children to consider would be to leave at the first signs:

I've got four kids and I'm not going to fight the fire for the house.  
I'd have to say get out and protect the family first, yeah.

One participant did say they would stay as long as possible then she would go:

We had an action plan that we'd stay as long as it was safe and then I'd go animals, kids, everything in the car and go. Check on our neighbour next door, our elderly neighbour.

And not being able to get out in time was considered by one participant:

Well see for me it would be - I'd - if you're thinking emergency stuff, so I'd make sure I had water. I'd take - I've got woollen blankets. I'd take woollen blankets so they can put them over them and obviously take documents and stuff, but you might not have that - might not have time.

Not having to worry about getting out important documents was important for one participant, she and her husband had made alternative plans:

We have a set of all our stuff at my husband's work in the city...

Some discussion followed about having electronic format for most things and having a hard drive to take or usb. One participant had made prepared for protecting photos:

I have got photos that - I do some stuff at work, so I have got a whole stack of my photos on the work computer, and then I've got some on CDs that I've got at my parent's house. I've got it all spread out. So that's the stuff that means the most to me, is the photos.

It was agreed that most documents can be replaced and discussion moved on to preparing the house:

It's also preparing your house, like your guttering and everything, so that even if you are slightly - like we've got bush at the back of us, but then at the back of that bush is road. So it's not a right big massive bush, but yeah we need to - we clear our gutters out and get rid of dry rubbishy stuff around near the house.

Having things tidy all the time because fire can move so quickly was a point of the discussion. There was also some discussion about the need to be home to save your house by putting out spot fires. One participant with two children said her partner might stay and defend the house:

My partner would stay but I wouldn't. I've got a box of photos in the garage that I'd just chuck in the car, and everything else. My chickens, my rabbit and my dog and I'm going.

All said they still had things packed up from the 2013 fires.

Road access was mentioned by most:

Well I'd say is there access, access to an exit. So anything else can be - well not everything can be replaced, but most things can be replaced. (Lawson 1)

What I do worry about in Lawson is what if there's a fire down and up, and there's nowhere to go? You can't go down to safety or up to safety. So I think the Mid Mountains Centre is meant to be our safety place. So as long as I can get to that...

There was then some discussion about the Neighbourhood Centre, the school and the pub being accessible as safer places.

The Fires Near Me app was mentioned as providing helpful information about where to go:

I think it's good with the new app they've got, the Fires Near You one, because you can kind of tell if there is a fire down there rather than driving there and going oh, can't get through there.

The impact on children of packing up and leaving for a few days when the previous fires happened was discussed:

Sometimes they give these warnings so suddenly, and then it blows over. Then if you're all the way down in Sydney - like when that other time came on, there were so many people that went down to Sydney and the kids were so unsettled, and their house was so totally safe.

Yeah. It freaks the kids out a little bit, yeah.

Yeah.

They really overreacted. Then they really regretted packing everyone up and going down to Sydney because the kids were like aren't we supposed to go to school? We just stayed at home. So we had everything packed ready to go. We had the car ready to go. We watched television and watched the alerts and things like that.

One participant said she did not have transport so had asked her mother to come and get her and the kids the night before the extreme day and returned the day after:

We were basically safe where we are, but because of that big hoo-ha and all the warning and everything, it could come into Lawson and Lawson will be wiped out almost, we were like okay, let's just get out of here.

Another concern that was raised was having one child at another school in Katoomba and not being able to get to him:

He's the furthest away. Everyone else is just here or with me. If he was trapped up there, then that - like that other time when the kids were

trapped up at the school and the parents couldn't get to them, that would just be terrible.

It was commented that in previous events the issue was well handled though it was unclear which event they were referring to.

Discussion went on to emergency kits and what that was. One mentioned fire alarms and another a fire blanket and water, first aid kit and torches. There was mention of the kids having a bag ready for themselves. Also mentioned were camper vans with supplies in them including food and water, solar power, generators, gas cookers for power outages.

When asked if they felt prepared for emergencies and there was something that bothered them most responded that they weren't too worried, they 'just take it as it comes' with one saying being informed was important:

I think you've just got to listen to the emergency services too. They can provide a lot of information and good ways to prepare as well.

Two in the Lawson group were renting their houses. For one this meant she would leave at any sign of threat

There's wood everywhere, there's dead trees, there's everything. So we'd - as soon as there's a fire anywhere near us we're just going to leave. Not going to - it's not - it would cost thousands and thousands of dollars to - yeah. I rent, so it's... the landlord's not going to do it. So we're just going to get up and leave.

The other who rented said she did as much maintenance as she could on the house:

We do gutter cleaning and keep the lawns tidy and the trees out of the way. That's as much as you can really do, unless you're there when the fire hits, with water buckets...and the bathtubs and garbage bins filled with water.

This participant said she was lucky because the owner gets a gardener in who does all the lawns and another said that there should be guidelines about outside maintenance of rental properties.

Another person talked about her neighbour having lots of cars and some kind of fuel tank in his yard and there was some discussion about council coming to check and whether RFS could be informed about it.

## Hazelbrook Scout Hall Interviews

Four interviews were held with three women and one man. Ages and number of children are indicated in table . One lived a block away from bush, three backed on to the bush

<34	35-50	No. of children
2	2	2
		3
		2
		2

Three said their properties backed onto bush land. All said they would leave early and left the area in 2013.

Insurance was the main preparation for houses.

I mean we've cleaned the gutters and it's always kept tidy but there's not much you can - you know, no sprinklers or anything like that. The water gets all sucked out anyway so... ..you don't get any water. We haven't got a swimming pool or a pump so yeah, it's basically just make sure our insurances are right. (H1)

Most had upgraded their insurance so that they were covered for rebuilding with all the new requirements.

The other main concern raised was being able to get out of the area:

So being able to get out because I mean you've got the one road really.  
Yeah, that would be the biggest concern is congestion of traffic. (H1)

The common theme was that people would take into account the information given to them and leave when advised to do so:

... we'd just leave. That came about from the last - when there were fires when we were up here and we just decided that's what we'd do.

Another key deciding factor for many was the effect of smoke:

... and then the smoke. For us, like I had really bad hay fever and the kids were coughing so it was good to get out. (MOCSH2)

Some had made extensive preparations of their home with diesel pump, stored water, sprinklers and keeping the property clear around the house and had a sense of familiarity with fire danger:

I suppose we've got like a basic bushfire plan in that if we had knowledge that a fire was coming, if it was catastrophic, like the circumstances, we wouldn't stay. We would leave. Anything other than that though we would - my husband would stay with his brother or whatever. I mean we've all been living in the mountains forever and have seen many a fire, seen many a yard fire burn up to the top there. I suppose it's a risk you choose to take isn't it if you feel like you've lived in an area long enough and seen other fires go through. (MOCSH2)

My husband is very vigilant at cleaning out the gutters and he's actually gone and cleared - he's an arborist so he's actually gone and cleared - like our house backs onto - well actually side and back. (MOCSH3)

Getting out was the priority and not many had plans for having to shelter in place. Some talked about defending the house and another getting under the house for shelter

If I didn't have warning and I was home by myself and I opened the back door and there was fire I'd probably look for a fire truck to get out. But if not I suppose I'd try and bunker down under the house and cover us with woollen blankets. I mean what else can you do? Seek shelter if it's right there. Seek shelter I guess. I would really like to have the warning to get out with my children. Certainly I would never intentionally keep my children at home with a fire imminent. I don't think that's very smart. (MOCSH2)

For most the emphasis was on having good insurance and being prepared to leave but for one person there was a desire to save the house if possible taking into account the conditions:

I'd hate to kind of go and the fire come nowhere near it but your house gets burnt down because you weren't there putting out spot fires. So there's kind of - you've got to be rational and you've got to think and be guided by local information to say the wind is in this direction, it's going that way, you'd be safe to kind of stay and protect your property. (MOCSH4)

## Blackheath Playgroup

There were six interviewees, all female. Each had one child and two were pregnant with their second child. Two were interviewed together (Interview 5).

<34	35-50	50-64	No. of children
	1		1
	1		1
1			1
		1	1 Grandchild
1			1
	1		1

People's locations varied and included, surrounded by bush, not far from the bush,, not very close to bush – in town and 'bush behind'.

For most the plan would be to leave early because of children and to avoid being trapped:

I think just because I've decided I've got the attitude that if I hear that something's coming we're just going to get out early and not get stuck out on the plateau, because I think that's the biggest risk, that you just get stuck ... I feel comfortable with that. I've got a list of things that if I had time I would want to grab like our birth certificates and stuff like that. (MOCSB1)

we're the sort of people that if there's even a hint of some sort of threat or that, yeah, I'd prefer to make a decision early on and then act on that and either feel silly - like we sort of did when we went to Sydney. We got to Sydney and thought oh okay, well that was all for nothing. But the peace of mind alone was enough to make it worthwhile. (MOCSB3)

The effects of smoke were a consideration for those with very young children:

If there was a catastrophic event and even though I'm several blocks back and we'd probably be - realistically be quite safe, it's still - smoke inhalation and all of that sort of thing is a concern. So those are my main worries I think. (MOCSB2)

everywhere was enveloped in smoke. He was getting all affected with the smoke - with his [unclear] glands, eyes and stuff. We went to Sydney and found that it wasn't much better to be honest. (MOCSB3)

For one participant not having access to a car could present some difficulty in leaving:

we've only got one car. My husband works out at Bathurst. So in the case of an emergency I guess my concern would be getting a newborn in a few months and my toddler organised and out of the house and to a safe location without access to a car. However, I'm sure I could rely on my neighbours - assuming they were home - if we needed to get out without a car. Otherwise there's the train as well - that sort of thing. So it's not a massive concern but it is something that plays on my mind a bit.



(MOCSB2)

The participant had thought about what things she would need to take:

I've got a list of things I need to grab in a bag and go - like medications and all of those sort of last minute things. I keep a backpack of other things - staples like water, a change of clothes and that sort of thing in case I ever needed to escape the house at short notice. Then I just have to grab some fresh food and stuff to take with us as well. (MOCSB2)

Another participant was a bit unconcerned about plans and when to get things done since they lived close to town and were used to the mountains:

I think we would know what to do. If a fire started we would do all that gutter and - all that kind of stuff. But we probably wouldn't do it until there was actually a fire. Both me and my husband grew up in the mountains so I think we're not as nervous about fire. Where we live is not very close to the bush as well. I grew up in a house right in the middle of the bush so we had fires come right by our place. Whereas here it feels like we're a bit more removed from the risk. (MOCSB5)

One older couple who minded their grandchild had preparations for fighting fire as well as leaving:

So bushfire-wise, we've got the petrol powered pump. I have all the - the negatives are all packed in a box. I just leave things - so we're quite used to, if we had to leave the things that we'd take from over the years of being evacuated and stuff like that. (MOCSB4)

A participant who was new to the area was keen to be more informed about dealing with bush fire:

But we've talked to our neighbours about it and what their strategies are. My husband and I, we're going to do the workshop where they tell you what to do in an emergency. (MOCSB5\_2)

## Warnings

So what would you do if there was word of a bushfire in the area?

Well, there's a radio station that you can listen to. Apparently they also sent texts to your phone if they want you to evacuate. I know there's - there's an evacuation point place near the bowling club. (MOCSB1)

## Golden Horizons Park Hazelbrook Interviews

At Golden Horizons Park in Hazelbrook interviews were held with four people, two males and two females.

<34	35-50	No. of children
2	2	3
		3
		2
		2

Two lived close to bushland and two lived closer to the village.

One person had left early with the warnings in 2013 as she had three young children:

I think I had a one, three and five year old and getting them moving fast if something happened quickly would be hard. So we decided to leave early so we had time ... to not be in a rush of people trying to leave at the last minute with three kids, and I think he was still breastfeeding so I knew it was going to be a long trip. (MOCSGH1)

Another said they had 'two water tanks and then two underground septic tanks that are full of water as well' and they kept the growth around their house clear well up to the bush (MOCSGH2). Nevertheless they had decided to leave in 2013:

We just went and visited the family for the day, even though being in Hazelbrook we weren't directly affected by either of the fires but you kind of felt sandwiched between the two of them as well. It's the first time since living up here that I've really felt anxious about it and was like I don't - I just want to not be anywhere near it (MOCSGH2).

If they got caught at home she hoped her husband who is in the RFS would be with them because she didn't really know what she would do. She did think about finding out who was around in the street:

I guess you'd have your instincts take over in how to protect them all. Whether there was anybody in the street, in the neighbourhood, that you can band together with. Yeah, but I hope I'm never in that situation where I have to hold a hose to a flame. (MOCSGH2)

One man had been to the briefing at the Hazelbrook RFS and decided with his partner that they would 'just nick off, yeah, if ever there's anything imminent, so we've done that a few times'. (MOCSGH3) They were not surrounded by bush but close to the school. If they had to stay he said they would 'huddle underneath the house' where it was all brick.

The fourth interviewee said he had lived there all his life:

We live in a bushfire area. You've got to be used to it and set up for that kind of thing. I've lived here my whole life, so I'm fairly - you get used to it. (MOCSGH4)

Being set up for him meant 'preparing your property and have an evacuation plan and first thing grab all living things and get out. Everything else can be

replaced.' he had previously sent his wife and daughter away and he stayed with the dog and watched the house. His preparations included:

Gutters done, no long - no stacks of wood anywhere. Pretty much just keep it neat and no clutter in the backyards or front yards. Just trying to keep everything short too - yeah. (MOCSGH4)

He said if the fire arrived he would:

Try and fight it with the hose as best I could. If it gets too bad, then jump in the car with the dog and take off. I'm not going to put myself or my loved ones in danger, so if I feel it's too close or as soon as the fire brigade say it's time to go, then I'm gone. (MOCSGH4)

If he was caught in a fire with the family at home the solution he described was:

Put the kids and the wife in the bathtub full of water, I suppose. Yeah, lock ourselves in a - I don't know what you'd do. Try and get out as best you can, there's always, I don't know. Try and get out but... (MOCSGH4)

With a little prompting he added:

Blankets that will be wet. If it's that dire, I mean, everything could be wet and put in place. I mean, you do the best you can with what you've got, I suppose. (MOCSGH4)

He said they always had bottles of water in the fridge and had some idea that there were places locally that people could go if necessary:

They do have - have set up like emergency meeting points and stuff. With the last fires that were getting close, I think it was up at the shops here, I think, they had the emergency meeting spots and stuff like that. (MOCSGH4)

## Other Areas of Interest

### Neighbours

Neighbours with rubbish in their yard were mentioned by one participant:

Oh, there's heaps of people in our street that have just got so much rubbish and stuff that would go up in flames really quickly. Piles of sticks and they don't remove anything and stuff; backed up to their houses and gutters that are full of pine needles and overflowing and, yeah. Yeah, it's the people on our street. I think that happens everywhere in the mountains. I think if you'd be hard-pressed to find a street that didn't have one or two houses that you'd go, oh, that's... (MOCSGH1)

A few were mindful of older neighbours in the area who might need help:

We've got an old guy next door, yeah, but we definitely knock on his door and just see how he's prepared too, if we needed to, because he's quite ancient and not too mobile. (MOCSGH3)

we've got a neighbour on the left of us who - she lives by herself. We try and look out for her. I don't think she's got internet access at home. So we try and look out for her when emergencies are in the air. She'll tell us if she knows anything as well. (MOCSB3)

### Sheltering in Place

When asked what they would do if they were caught and could not leave the area in a bush fire most were unclear about what they would do. While they had thought about leaving early, they had not thought about being at home.

One participant spontaneously asked about being caught:

I suppose the one thing I'd like to learn about is if we did get trapped out there in a bushfire and no one could come to us to help us, where's the safest place for us to be? In the house or... You know, what do you do in the house if you are really stuck. (MOCSB1)

So I think my first instinct would probably be to go towards - we're opposite a school. So probably head to the playground where there's no trees or something - or I'd head into a car park in Blackheath or that sort of thing. If I couldn't get out of the house - I honestly don't know. I haven't thought about that. I'd like to think that we wouldn't leave it to the last minute but last minutes happen I guess. (MOCSB3)

No, we're literally right behind the shops. So I don't feel cut off and because we've got so many - there's so many residents and streets between us and bush, I don't feel isolated in that way at all, because we're so close to the shops, and that's where people go sort of as a safe place. Yeah, depending on where the fires come but generally town centre, people will move towards that centre. (MOCSGH1)

One participant whose husband was in the RFS said she had no idea what she would do if caught at home:

That's a really hard question. I would just hope to God that (husband) was with us, because if I was at home with the boys and was unable to leave, I

don't know really what I'd do. (MOCSGH2)

She went on to talk about protecting the house which she knew a bit about but not how to protect herself and her children in the house:

Yeah, well I guess for me it's probably worthwhile knowing how the pumps and everything work, so that if there is that situation at least I can turn it on. Even though it's cleared, there's still a lot of burning material that could easily be cleaned up to get rid of that. (MOCSGH2)

Two participants thought sheltering under the house would be the best option:

Our house is raised up. It's like it's got a lot space underneath. So I would imagine we'd huddle underneath the place. But... it is kind of open but it's brick all around us and I'd say that would be the safest area. (MOCSGH3)

If I didn't have warning and I was home by myself and I opened the back door and there was fire I'd probably look for a fire truck to get out. But if not I suppose I'd try and bunker down under the house and cover us with woollen blankets. (MOCSH2)

The idea that it was best to seek shelter was evident but this meant under the house nevertheless.

One participant was able to think of the inside of the house and what to do though he was still considering getting out of the area:

Put the kids and the wife in the bathtub full of water, I suppose. Yeah, lock ourselves in a - I don't know what you'd do. Try and get out as best you can, there's always, I don't know. Try and get out but... Blankets that will be wet. If it's that dire, I mean, everything could be wet and put in place. I mean, you do the best you can with what you've got, I suppose. (MOCSGH4)

One participant had the idea that people in Winmalee survived because they had fire shelters on their properties but also recognised that circumstances can vary for people and places:

I think most people who I know that survived Winmalee fires that stayed with their homes ended up - and no-one died obviously - ended up bunkering down in bushfire hatches that they had on their property. Like friends of ours had one that was on their property from must have been like the 60s or something and they all went into that. It had like an exhaust system or whatever. It burnt right over the top of them but not many people had that. (MOCSH2)

### 3. Family Connections Preparedness Project Meet Your Street BBQs and Preparedness Workshops

Four Meet Your Street events were held in September/October 2015 and most attendees were locals. In total there were 124 adults who completed 83 surveys, and 133 children attending.

- North Katoomba Melrose Park 12 noon – 3pm Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> September, Katoomba-Leura RFS attending plus partnering with Katoomba Neighbourhood Centre and Friends of Melrose Park. 60 adults and 55 children attended. 29 surveys were completed; 4 bookings for preparedness workshops were recorded. Information handed out: 7 copies of MOCS A3 handout; 2 copies of RFS info re pets; 14 copies of Red Cross Get ready books; 5 copies Red Cross Emergency Rediplan books.
- Lawson Wilson Park 5pm – 7pm on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> October, Lawson RFS attending. 25 adults and 20 children attended; 22 surveys completed; 2 workshop bookings recorded. Information distributed: 2 Emergency Rediplan; 5 Get Ready books
- Hazelbrook Golden Horizons Park 12 noon – 3pm on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> October, Hazelbrook RFS attending. 24 adults and 35 children attended. 21 surveys completed; 4 workshop bookings recorded. Information handed out: 2 Emergency Rediplan; 6 Get ready books; 5 A3 handout.
- Wentworth Falls Wilson Park 4.30pm – 6.30pm Friday 16<sup>th</sup> September, Wentworth Falls RFS attending. 15 adults and 23 children attended. 11 surveys completed, 0 workshop bookings recorded.

A total of 10 preparedness workshop bookings were recorded. Information and number distributed at all workshops:

MOCS A3 handout - 12

RFS info re pets - 2

Red Cross Get ready books - 25

Red Cross Emergency Rediplan books – 9

People heard about the event primarily from flyers distributed to letterboxes in each area by community development staff from the Neighbourhood Centres. Many fortuitously happened to be in park or passing by at the time the event was on.

Surveys were used at the events as a means of engagement with people about their bush fire preparedness plans. Two community workers engaged with people at each event and RFS volunteers helped with the BBQ and ran activities for children. Child care was available with one child care worker attending each event.

The survey instrument can be found in the appendix.

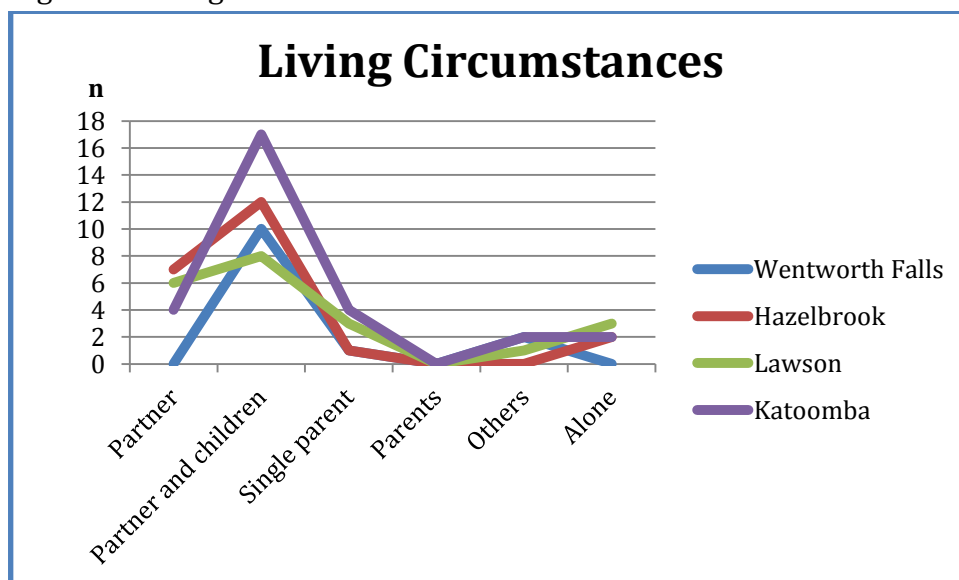
## Meet Your Street Survey Analysis Summary

The survey data indicate that the bbq event draws families and younger age groups than other events such as More Than a Fire Plan. The majority of attendees at Meet Your Street are families with children so it is a successful format for this demographic.

Main points from the surveys:

- Of the 82 surveys completed, 68 per cent were completed by women and 29 per cent by men. The highest proportions of males, 33 per cent and 35 per cent, were at the Katoomba and Lawson events. The lowest proportion, 18 per cent, was at Wentworth Falls. One person did not respond to the question and one person reported their gender as transgender/intersex.
- Sixty six percent were under 50 years of age. The majority, 46 per cent were in the 35-49 year age group, 20 per cent were in the <34 year age group and 23 per cent were in the 50-64 year age group. Seven percent were in the 65-74 year age group and 4 per cent in the 75-84 year age group.
- Sixty eight per cent had children. Fifty seven per cent lived with their partner and children and 11 per cent were single parents. Four of the single parents were at the Katoomba event. A total of 7 (9 per cent) lived alone. Two indicated that they lived with their partner and children plus grandchildren and one single parent had a grandson living with them.

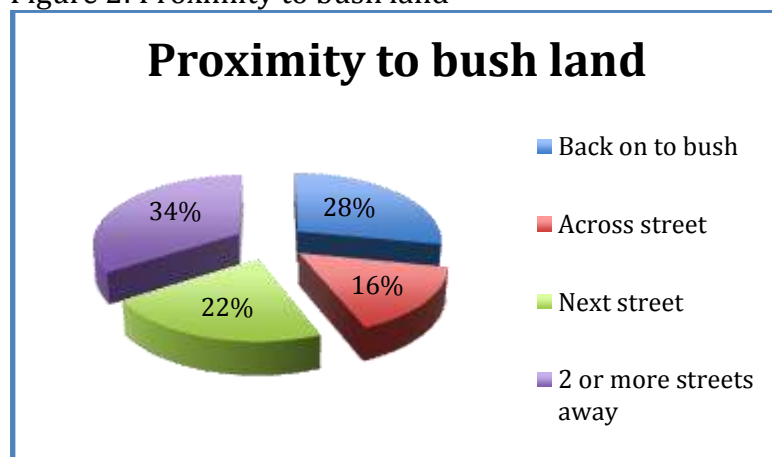
Figure 1: Living circumstances



- It is evident from the completed surveys that people were from all parts of the areas with 28 per cent saying they lived on the bush and 16 per cent across the road, 22 per cent lived in the next street and 34 per cent two or more streets away. In all 56 per cent were not located directly near

bush land.

Figure 2: Proximity to bush land



Emergency plans questions were completed by between 87 per cent and 99 per cent of respondents. While 74 per cent said they had talked about a plan to leave early, less than 50 per cent said they had the other items in place, except for preparing house and grounds which 56 per cent said they had in place.

Only 24 per cent said they had practised emergency plans and 34 per cent had planned for an event where it was not possible to leave the house or thought about pets. Having the contact details of neighbours and created an emergency kit were in place for 44 per cent and 43 per cent respectively.

A high proportion of Katoomba respondents, between 6 and 17, ticked NA for many items. This could be explained by the fact that 79 per cent from Katoomba said they did not live directly near the bush. Comments do not indicate any particular reason.

Not applicable was highest for talked about plan to stay and defend and talked about emergency plan with children. This could be because people are clear they are not going to stay and defend with the first and with the second because children are very young or there are no children in the home as was the case for 32 per cent of respondents.

On the need for help in an emergency 82 per cent said they would not need help, 11 per cent said they would receive help from someone not living with them and no one said they would need help and did not know who would help them.

Forty three percent said they met new people, 43 per cent said they did not meet you new people and 14 per cent did not respond to the question.

When asked whether they would like to see more connections between people in the street 85 per cent said yes, one person said no and 14 per cent did not respond to the question.

#### Comments

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 down and the AIDA 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.

## Detailed Meet Your Street Survey Analysis

The following details results from the survey conducted to engage with people about fire preparedness and to record nonidentifiable details of those attending.

### Gender

Table 1: Gender – numbers and total percentage

	Male	Female
Wentworth Falls	2	9
Hazelbrook	6	16
Lawson	7	13
Katoomba	9	18
Total	24	56
%	29	68

Percentage male by location of event

	% Male
Wentworth Falls	18
Hazelbrook	27
Lawson	35
Katoomba	33

### Age

Table 2: Age groups – numbers and percentage

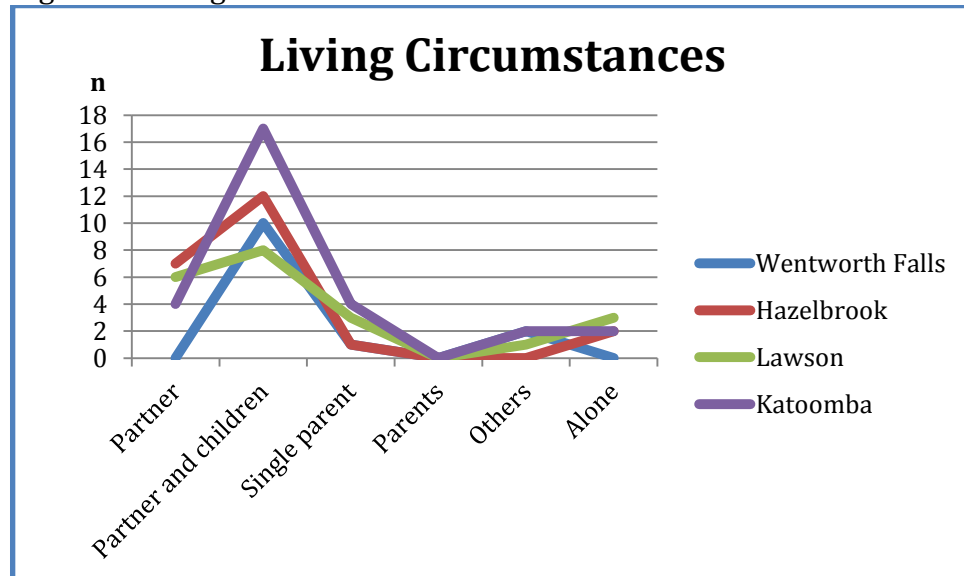
	<34	35-49	50-64	65-74	75-84
Wentworth Falls	1	8	1	1	0
Hazelbrook	6	8	6	0	2
Lawson	1	9	7	2	1
Katoomba	8	13	5	3	0
Total	16	38	19	6	3
%	20	46	23	7	4

### Living Circumstances

Table 3: Living circumstances

	Partner	Partner and children	Single parent	Parents	Others	Alone
Wentworth Falls	0	10	1	0	2	0
Hazelbrook	7	12	1	0	0	2
Lawson	6	8	3	0	1	3
Katoomba	4	17	4	0	2	2
Total	17	47	9	0	5	7
%	21	57	11	0	6	9

Figure 1: Living circumstances

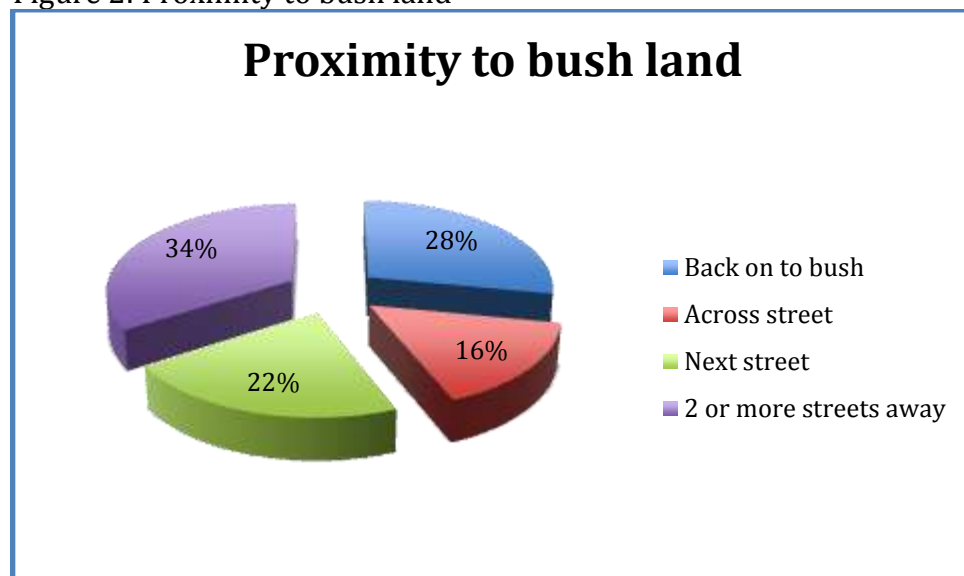


#### Proximity to bushland

Table 4: Proximity to bush land numbers and percentages

	Back on to bush	Across street	Next street	2 or more streets away
Wentworth Falls	3	3	4	1
Hazelbrook	7	4	6	5
Lawson	9	3	2	6
Katoomba	4	3	6	16
Total	23	13	18	28
%	28	16	22	34

Figure 2: Proximity to bush land



## Emergency Plans

The highest preparation measure was ‘talked about a plan to leave early’ with 74 per cent saying they had this in place. A fairly high proportion, 56 per cent, also said they had prepared their houses. The lowest proportion, 24 per cent, was for ‘practised emergency plans’.

Table 5: Emergency plans

%	In place	Plan to do	NA
Talked about plan to leave early	74	12	12
Talked about plan to stay and defend	37	9	48
Planned for event not possible to leave area	46	16	32
Planned for event not possible to leave house	35	20	37
Practised emergency plans	24	28	37
Discussed emergency plans with children	26	17	46
Created emergency kit	43	33	21
Prepared house and grounds	56	27	13
Thought about pets	45	7	41
Have contact details for street	44	15	28

There was a higher proportion of NA chosen for every item in the questions about emergency plans for Katoomba except for the item ‘planned for event where it is not possible to leave the area’ as shown in Table 6. There were a much higher number of people who did not consider that they lived near bush land at the Katoomba event as can be seen in Figure 5. A very high proportion of respondents from Katoomba did not consider having the contact details of neighbours as applicable which is surprising.

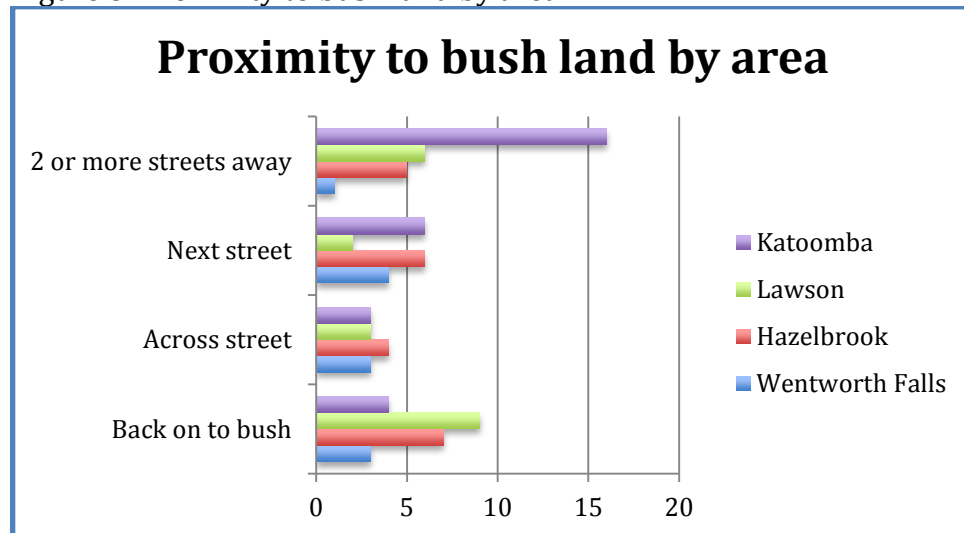
Table 6: Proportion not applicable

Proportion NA	Wentworth Falls	Hazelbrook	Lawson	Katoomba
Talked about plan to leave early	0	14	14	21
Talked about plan to stay and defend	45	32	48	59
Planned for event not possible to leave area	9	41	24	39
Planned for event not possible to leave house	27	36	33	41
Practised emerge plans	27	36	33	45
Discussed emergency plans with children	18	55	38	55
Created emergency kit	9	23	5	34
Prepared house and grounds	9	9	10	21
Thought about pets	36	41	33	48
Have contact details for street	18	18	14	48

### Proximity to bush land by area

The highest number of people living close to bush land was at the Lawson event, followed by Hazelbrook. Katoomba residents were more likely to live 2 or more streets away from bush land.

Figure 3: Proximity to bush land by area



### Help needed

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 said they would not need help, 11 per cent said help would be provided by someone they lived with and seven per cent would receive help from someone not living with them. No one said they would need help but did not know who would provide it.

Table 7: Help needed

	None needed	Help living with	Help not living with	Help not known
Wentworth Falls	8	3	0	0
Hazelbrook	19	2	2	0
Lawson	17	0	2	0
Katoomba	23	4	2	0
Total	67	9	6	0
%	82	11	7	0

### Meet new people

Half of those responding to the question, 43 per cent said they did meet new people and the same number said they did not.

Table 8: Meet new people

Meet new people	Yes	No
Wentworth Falls	4	7
Hazelbrook	11	6
Lawson	11	6
Katoomba	9	16
Total	35	35
%	43	43

### More connections in street

Would you like to see more connections between people in your street?  
There was a very positive response to this question in all areas though 14 per cent did not respond to the question.

Table 9: More connections in street

More connections in street	Yes	No
Wentworth Falls	9	0
Hazelbrook	20	1
Lawson	16	0
Katoomba	25	
Total	70	1
%	85	1

### Comments

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 down and the AIDA 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.

## 4. Family Connections Preparedness Workshops 2015

Three preparedness workshops were held in October 2015, one each in Wentworth Falls, Lawson and Hazelbrook. In total there were 22 attendees, 20 evaluations were completed. Ten were from the Wentworth Falls workshop, four from Lawson and six from Hazelbrook. Three participants had attended a Meet Your Street event.

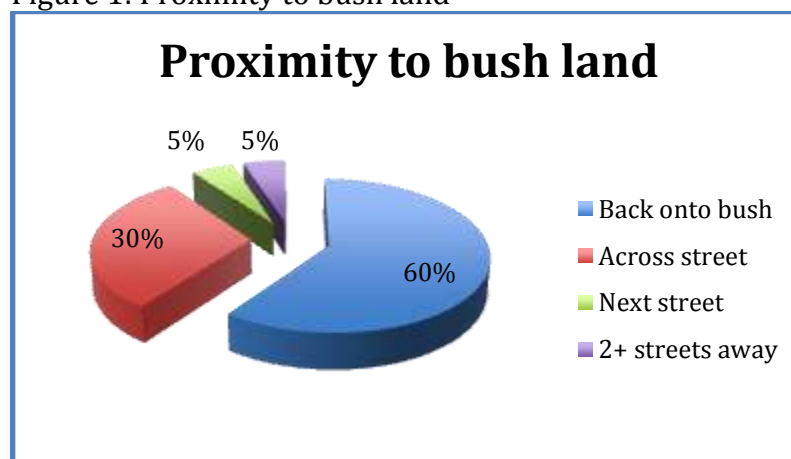
The workshops were conducted by one community development worker and the Blue Mountains Engagement Coordinator for the RFS.

Of these, four were male and 16 were female, two were aged under 35 years, five were in the 35-50 year age group, five in the 50-59 year age group and seven in the 60-69 year age group. There was one attendee who was over 85 years at Wentworth Falls which also had the two youngest attendees.

Four respondents lived alone, nine lived with their partner and children, four with their partner only and there was one single parent.

A high proportion of those attending lived close to the bush or across the road from bush land.

Figure 1: Proximity to bush land



### Results of attending workshop

Responses to this set of questions were reported by between 13 and 18 of those who completed surveys. The lowest response rate was for discussing the emergency plan and the highest for writing down the emergency plan and making new connections. Fifteen responded to practicing the plan and understanding the importance of different plans. Seventeen responded to the four other questions.

Between six and eight respondents strongly agreed with the statements as shown in Table 1 except for better understanding the role of emergency services and connecting with someone in my neighbourhood. Between six and eight agreed that they had a better understanding of the role of emergency services, were aware of tasks, had identified strategies to cope, would write down plans and had made connections.

Three disagreed that they had a better understanding of the role of emergency



services, two disagreed that would practice their emergency plans and one disagreed that they had made new connections.

A number of people, one up to seven, were neutral, neither agreeing nor disagreeing with most statements. The highest was for new connections and the lowest was for discussing emergency plans.

The strongest point is the identification of strategies which 15 agreed or strongly agreed with. Being aware of tasks to undertake and writing down a plan were the next strongest with 14 positive and three and four neutral respectively. Feeling more confident had no negative responses but four were neutral.

Table 1: Results of attending workshops

As a result of attending the workshop today, I	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree	Number of responses
<b>Feel more confident to act in an emergency</b>	0	0	4	6	7	17
<b>Better understand the role of emergency services</b>	0	3	5	7	2	17
<b>Am aware of tasks I can undertake to physically prepare my property</b>	0	0	3	7	7	17
<b>Have identified strategies to cope during emergencies</b>	0	0	2	8	7	17
<b>Will discuss my emergency plan with those in my household</b>	0	0	1	4	8	13
<b>Will write down my emergency plan</b>	0	0	4	8	6	18
<b>Will practice my emergency plan with those in my household</b>	0	2	2	4	7	15
<b>Understand the importance of having different plans for multiple scenarios</b>	0	0	4	5	6	15
<b>Have made connections with people/someone who lives in my neighbourhood</b>	0	1	7	6	4	18

The weakest points of the workshop appear to have been understanding the role

of emergency services with nine strongly agreed or agreed responses, practicing the plan and understanding the importance of different plans which had 11 positive responses each. These could be followed up with people for clarification and made clearer in the presentation in future.

It was not necessarily surprising that people did not make new connections in their neighbourhood as participants could have been from very different parts of the areas.

### Response to the second activity, 'If you can't leave home'

The majority found the exercise helped them to review, consider issues or provided strategies for them. Two respondents said they were not comfortable with or did not benefit from the exercise 'if you can't leave home' though these participants also indicated that the exercise made them consider issues they had not previously thought about. One participant ticked all four options.

Table 2: Exercise

Exercise 'If you can't leave home'	n
<b>This exercise has motivated me to develop or review and practice my fire plan</b>	11
<b>This exercise made me consider issues I had not previously thought about</b>	7
<b>This exercise provided me with constructive strategies to support my children during an emergency</b>	2
<b>I felt uncomfortable/did not benefit from undertaking this exercise</b>	2

### Comments

#### Reason for attending

All participants commented on reasons for attending the workshop.

The most common reason given for attending was to get information, mentioned by 16 and to be prepared, mentioned by 11. Five talked about being at home with children and six mentioned refining or reviewing their fire plan. Five mentioned not being able to leave or escape and the steps to take.

One mentioned a feeling of panic which was hopefully alleviated:

Young children and lack of preparedness due to panic feeling.

Another stated:

To learn about how to defend home if forced to stay with children.

The intended message was what to do if caught at home and how to stay safe.

#### Most useful part

The "15 minute to impact" scenario was the most popular part of the workshop with 11 mentioning it specifically. Three said all of it was useful. Other mentions

included brainstorming, making a list of what to take, and information.

### **Improvements**

Many said they thought having more of the workshops and getting more people to them was the only improvement needed. Four said nothing needed to be improved with one noting that it was 'very interactive with useful activities' and another thought 'the picture cards worked well to start conversation'. One wanted to more on pets especially when they have 'learned to dislike and fear the carry box'.

Other suggestions;

Video show of live situations

Actual scenarios, some photos, overheads about minutes to impact

Maybe to provide a house plan and approach of the fire

## Additional Resources Reviewed

A search of available resources determined that **there are many great resources out there which can be used by families however these are either not**

- *Specifically designed for families* (therefore lack information for parents about communicating with children, the unique considerations families need to take into account and ways to engage children in thinking about preparedness and emergencies); OR
- *Relevant to families to the Blue Mountains* (they have been developed interstate or overseas and do not address the hazards the Blue Mountains experience or use terminology that is not used in Australia)

It was determined that **a preparedness resource for family's needs to include the following:**

- Information on and ways to physically prepare home and contents (including preparing an emergency kit);
- An emergency plan;
- Information on emotional preparedness including strategies for talking to children about preparedness and emergencies;
- Games/apps educating children about emergencies, hazards and the importance of being prepared

AND

- Be relevant for families living in the Blue Mountains

*The resource which I have found best meets this criteria are the RED Cross REDIPlans (and associated factsheets developed by the Red Cross) however the Red Cross is in the process of re-designing these.*

Links relating to physically preparing home and contents gathered were:

- **NSW Rural Fire Service**

<http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/plan-and-prepare>

- **Fire and Rescue NSW**

<http://www.fire.nsw.gov.au/>

- **State Emergency Service**

<http://www.ses.nsw.gov.au/>

- **Emergency Management Australia**

<https://www.emknowledge.gov.au/>

Other available resources noted included:

[http://stjohn.org.au/assets/uploads/fact%20sheets/english/FS\\_disaster\\_toolkit.pdf](http://stjohn.org.au/assets/uploads/fact%20sheets/english/FS_disaster_toolkit.pdf)

Involve Your Kids - Bushfire Survival Planning Ebook – Bushfire CRC

<http://www.bushfirecrc.com/resources/product/involve-your-kids-bushfire-survival-planning-ebook>

For Preparing an Emergency Plan the Australian Red Cross REDIPlan includes documents that have been designed to help people better prepare, respond to and recover from emergencies

[www.redcross.org.au/emergency-resources.aspx](http://www.redcross.org.au/emergency-resources.aspx)

There is also a **Sesame Street program** – Let's Get Ready  
Multiple media resource designed to help entire families, especially those with young children, to plan and prepare together for emergencies  
<http://www.sesamestreet.org/parents/topicsandactivities/toolkits/ready>



A great tool for families with young children (pre-school and lower primary school aged children). Includes activities for children, ways parents can help young children become more resilient, short video clips of Sesame Street characters talking about ways to prepare as well as downloadable plans and fact sheets.

Resource was developed in the United States so includes terminology and information that is not relevant to Australia

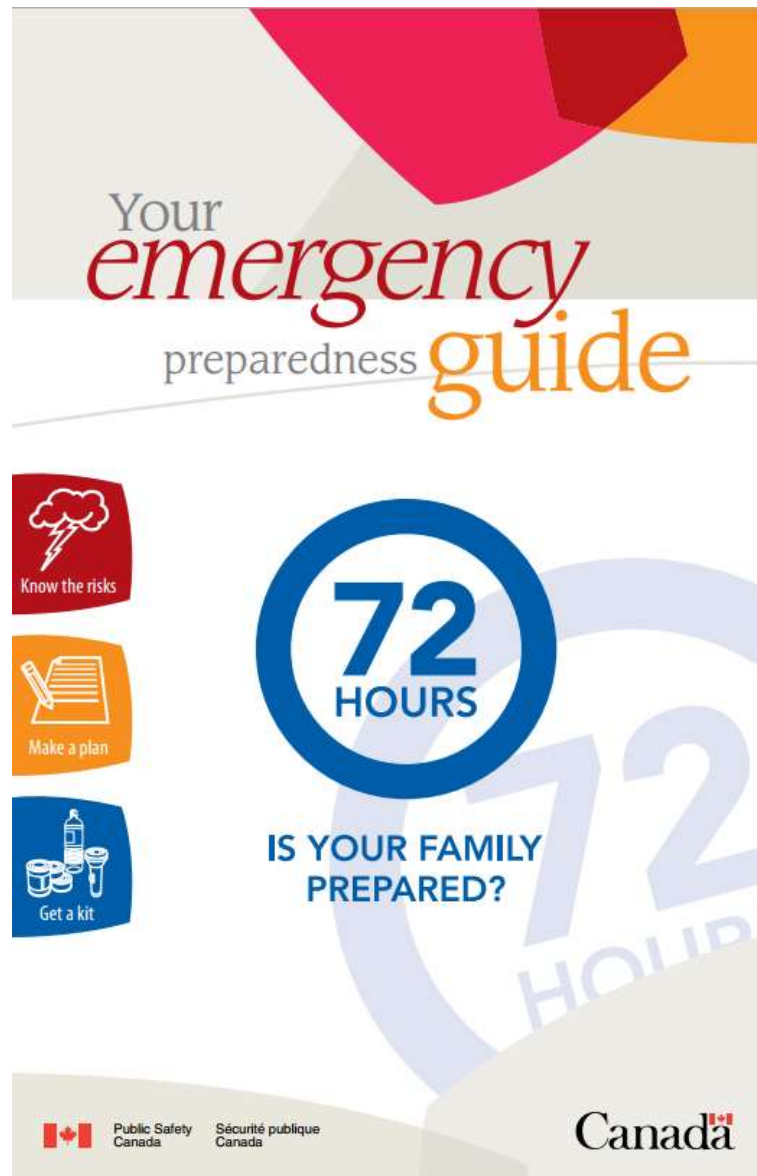
A resource from the **Government of Canada** that is useful – Get Prepared  
An online resource including a preparedness guide, strategies for talking to children about emergencies and a short video highlighting the need to think about contingencies

<http://www.getprepared.gc.ca/cnt/plns/index-en.aspx>

Includes a preparedness guide, strategies for talking to kids about emergencies and a short video highlighting the different situations you may be in when an emergency occurs

Not a very engaging website, however language is clear and to the point and contains key messages

Preparedness Guide is similar to the Red Cross REDplans – covers 3 steps to prepare, easy to read, clearly laid out information  
Resource was developed in Canada so includes terminology and information that is not relevant to Australia



Save the Children – Disaster Checklist for Parents

[http://www.savethechildren.org/site/c.8rKLIXMGIpI4E/b.8777055/k.18AB/Get\\_Redy\\_Get\\_Safe\\_Plan\\_Ahead.htm](http://www.savethechildren.org/site/c.8rKLIXMGIpI4E/b.8777055/k.18AB/Get_Redy_Get_Safe_Plan_Ahead.htm)

Concise preparedness checklist for families – includes factors families need to take into consideration

Not enough on it's own – needs to accompany or be part of a broader tool

Resource was developed in the United States so includes terminology and

**MOUNTAINS OUTREACH COMMUNITY SERVICE  
FAMILY CONNECTIONS PREPAREDNESS PROJECT**

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Emotional preparedness including strategies for talking to children about preparedness and emergencies

- **Government of Canada – Get Prepared**  
<http://www.getprepared.gc.ca/cnt/plns/index-en.aspx>  
Government of Canada resource – includes information on helping kids cope during an emergency as well as scenarios that parents can go through with children, includes Canadian terminology and references
- **Australian Red Cross - Talking to children: parents' guide -**  
[http://www.redcross.org.au/files/Emergency\\_services\\_how\\_to\\_talk\\_to\\_children\\_fact\\_sheet\\_20110609.pdf](http://www.redcross.org.au/files/Emergency_services_how_to_talk_to_children_fact_sheet_20110609.pdf)  
Red Cross resource – outlines importance of and tips for talking to kids, Australian resource



- **Australian Psychological Society – Preparing children for the threat of bushfire: Information for parents and carers**  
<http://www.psychology.org.au/Assets/Files/Preparing-children-for-threat-bushfires.pdf>





Games/apps educating children about emergencies, hazards and the importance of being prepared

## U.S. Department of Homeland Security – Ready

<http://www.ready.gov/kids>

Great resource for families with children in later primary school aged children – includes games for kids, information on hazards that is specifically designed for kids, information for parents about communicating with kids (all ages) and tools and plans that can be downloaded

Resource was developed in the United States so includes terminology and information that is not relevant to Australia (is VERY ‘American’)



## Australian Emergency Management Institute – Disaster Resilience for Schools

<https://schools.aemi.edu.au/>

Classroom resources that could be used by children at home – activities educating about preparedness (e.g. why it is important to plan ahead, what to put in a kit) as well as building resilience (how to cope when an emergency happens)

Includes hazard specific information

Before the Storm – for children in years 3 - 5

## WOULD YOU SURVIVE A STORM?



Online activities for primary school aged children – up to years 4/5  
Include games teaching kids about what is an emergency, information on hazards, what to put in an emergency kit, how to prepare house/property, what to do during an emergency  
Queensland resources include info not relevant to BM e.g. cyclones and QLD map

Triple Zero Kids Challenge  
<http://kids.triplezero.gov.au/>



Queensland Fire and Emergency Services -  
<http://www.emergency.qld.gov.au/kids/kidnas/>



Queensland Fire and Emergency Services – Kids Corner  
<https://www.fire.qld.gov.au/kids/>

					
<b>Blazer's Fire Safety Tips</b> An electronic book providing various fire safety information, a good read for all ages.	<b>Blazer's Quiz</b> An electronic book to test your knowledge of Blazer's Year 1 fire safety messages.	<b>Fire Truck money box</b> Print and cut out to create your own money box.	<b>Junior Firefighter Quiz</b> Take our 5 question quiz to earn certificate.	<b>The Blazer Book</b> Print the entire colour-in book or just the pages you want to colour in.	<b>Triple Zero Game</b> Play this online game and see how much about Triple Zero you know.

## Appendix

## Appendix 1: Meet Your Street Survey Instrument

# Meet Your Street

## 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. What would be useful to help you prepare for bushfires or other emergencies?

10. Do you work out of the Blue Mountains area? ☐ Yes ☐ No No. days week \_\_\_\_\_

11. How many neighbours do you have contact with on a daily, weekly or monthly basis:

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:

Need for help	Please tick one
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	

14. Did you meet new people from your street or neighbourhood at the Meet Your Street BBQ? Yes No

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

16. I am happy to be contacted for a follow up survey and/or short interview ☐

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 2: Additional Resource Prepared

An additional resource was prepared for distribution at Meet Your Street events and Preparedness Workshops that was focused on emergency contacts and activities for children. See attached.

# PREPARING FOR AN EMERGENCY

Being prepared for an emergency will assist you and your family to respond better if an emergency occurs.

Being prepared means knowing the risks of where you are, talking to your family about what will you do if an emergency occurs and putting together an emergency kit.

The following services provide information to assist your family to prepare for an emergency:

### Australian Red Cross

Documents that have been designed to help people better prepare, respond to and recover from emergencies

[www.redcross.org.au/emergency-resources.aspx](http://www.redcross.org.au/emergency-resources.aspx)

### Fire and Rescue NSW

Information on preparing to reduce the risk of fire occurring in your home and to surviving a house fire

[www.fire.nsw.gov.au/](http://www.fire.nsw.gov.au/)

### NSW Rural Fire Service

Information on preparing your home and family for a bushfire, including the Bush Fire Survival Plan guide

[www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/plan-and-prepare](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/plan-and-prepare)  
[www.MyFirePlan.com.au](http://www.MyFirePlan.com.au)

*Also available through MyFirePlan Application for Android and iPhone*

### NSW State Emergency Service

Assistance to prepare for storms, floods and tsunamis

[www.ses.nsw.gov.au/](http://www.ses.nsw.gov.au/)



The following overseas resources may assist your family to prepare for emergencies

- For pre-school and lower primary school aged children: **Sesame Street Let's Get Ready** [www.sesamestreet.org/parents/topicsandactivities/toolkits/ready#](http://www.sesamestreet.org/parents/topicsandactivities/toolkits/ready#)
- For older primary school aged children: **Ready Kids** <http://www.ready.gov/kids>

**IN AN EMERGENCY CALL 000**

With thanks to BM Neighbourhood Centres, the Australian Red Cross, Mountains Outreach Community Service & NSW & Commonwealth Governments via BM Flexible Community Grants Program in developing this resource



# PREPARING FOR AN EMERGENCY

## CHILDREN

It is important to include children in discussions on emergency plans. By talking about the effects of an emergency as well as what your family will do if an emergency occurs, children will be better able to manage during and recover from an emergency. For tips on how to talk about emergencies with your children please visit: Australian Red Cross *Talking to children: parents' guide* - [http://www.redcross.org.au/files/Emergency\\_services\\_how\\_to\\_talk\\_to\\_children\\_fact\\_sheet\\_20110609.pdf](http://www.redcross.org.au/files/Emergency_services_how_to_talk_to_children_fact_sheet_20110609.pdf)

The following websites and applications assist children to prepare for emergencies:

### Before the Storm

An educational game for primary school aged students to get thinking about storm preparation

<https://schools.aemi.edu.au/Before-the-Storm> or download for iPhone

### Triple Zero Kids Challenge

Educational games for primary school aged children to identify, confidently react to and report legitimate emergencies by calling Triple Zero

[www.kids.triplezero.gov.au](http://www.kids.triplezero.gov.au)

### Queensland Fire and Emergency Services - Blazer's Kids Page and Get Ready Kidnas

Activities for primary school aged children teaching kids about emergencies and how to keep family and friends safe

<https://www.fire.qld.gov.au/kids/>

<http://www.emergency.qld.gov.au/kids/kidnas/>

## PETS

It is also important to consider your pets in emergency plans. For information on how to keep your pet safe, please visit:

World Animal Protection <http://protectyourpet.worldanimalprotection.org.au/>

RSPCA <http://www.rspca-act.org.au/sites/default/files/website/ACT/BushfireBrochure.pdf>



IN AN EMERGENCY CALL 000

# DURING AN EMERGENCY

An emergency is a situation where:

- Someone is seriously injured or in need of urgent medical help;
- Your life or property is being threatened, such as through fire, flood, earthquake, explosion or accident; or
- You have just witnessed a serious accident or crime

For information during an emergency, please see the following sites

## **Rural Fire Service**

1800 679 739

[www.rfs.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au) or [www.myfireplan.com.au](http://www.myfireplan.com.au)

Twitter: @NSWRFS Facebook: [www.facebook.com/nswrfs](https://www.facebook.com/nswrfs)

## **Fire and Rescue**

[www.frnsw.gov.au](http://www.frnsw.gov.au)

Twitter: @frnsw Facebook: [www.facebook.com/frnsw](https://www.facebook.com/frnsw)

## **State Emergency Service**

132 500

[www.ses.nsw.gov.au](http://www.ses.nsw.gov.au)

Twitter: NSWSES Facebook: [www.facebook.com/NSW.SES](https://www.facebook.com/NSW.SES)

## **NSW Roads and Maritime Services**

132 701

[www.livetraffic.com](http://www.livetraffic.com) or [www.rms.nsw.gov.au](http://www.rms.nsw.gov.au)

## **Police Assistance Line**

131 444

[www.police.nsw.gov.au](http://www.police.nsw.gov.au)

Twitter: @nswpolice Facebook: [www.facebook.com/nswpoliceforce](https://www.facebook.com/nswpoliceforce)

## **Health Direct**

1800 022 222

[www.healthdirect.gov.au](http://www.healthdirect.gov.au)

## **Translating and Interpreting Service**

131 450

[www.immi.gov.au/tis](http://www.immi.gov.au/tis)

**IN AN EMERGENCY CALL 000**



# DURING AN EMERGENCY

Information can also be accessed through the following smartphone applications

- **Fires Near Me:** Provides fire information on bushfire incidents in NSW
- **Disaster Watch:** Provides information about disaster related events in Australia
- **Emergency +:** Provides the caller with information about when to call Triple Zero as well as information about who to call in various emergency situations
- **Storm Safe:** Provides information on how to prepare for and what to do during severe weather
- **Australian Early Warning Network:** Provides location based early warning notifications for severe weather and natural hazards



## Media and Radio

- **ABC Emergency** [www.abc.net.au/news/emergency/state/nsw/](http://www.abc.net.au/news/emergency/state/nsw/)  
To find your local ABC go to <http://www.abc.net.au/local/>  
Download: ABC or ABC Radio for iPhone and Android  
Twitter: @abcnews
- **Emergency Alert** - The national telephone warning system used by emergency services to send voice messages to landlines and text messages to mobile phones within a defined area about likely or actual emergencies. This system should not be relied on to provide information about emergencies.



## What will you do during an emergency?

1. **Put in place your emergency plan** and go to family or friends you have spoken to and plan to stay with.
2. **Evacuation Centres** provide people affected by disaster with immediate basic needs such as food, accommodation as well as financial assistance. Evacuation centres provide a place of temporary refuge for people evacuated from homes in the vicinity of the disaster as well as refuge for people who may be travelling through the affected area. Evacuation centres are determined at the time of the emergency.
3. **Neighbourhood Safer Places** are a place of last resort during a bush fire emergency. They are to be used when all other options in your Bush Fire Survival Plan can't be put into action safely. For a list of Neighbourhood Safer Places in your local area - <http://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/plan-and-prepare/neighbourhood-safer-places>

IN AN EMERGENCY CALL 000



# Meet Your Street

**Building bushfire preparedness together.**

## Hazelbrook

**Saturday 10th October**

**12 noon—3pm**

**Golden Horizons Park**

Between Blue Hills Rd and Red Gum Ave

**A free family event for the whole community... join in the fun and meet your neighbours.**

**. Free BBQ**

- . Children's Activities
- . Discovery Rangers from National Parks
- . Fireplan information

**Info: 4758 6811 [www.mocs.org.au](http://www.mocs.org.au)**

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Australian Government

