

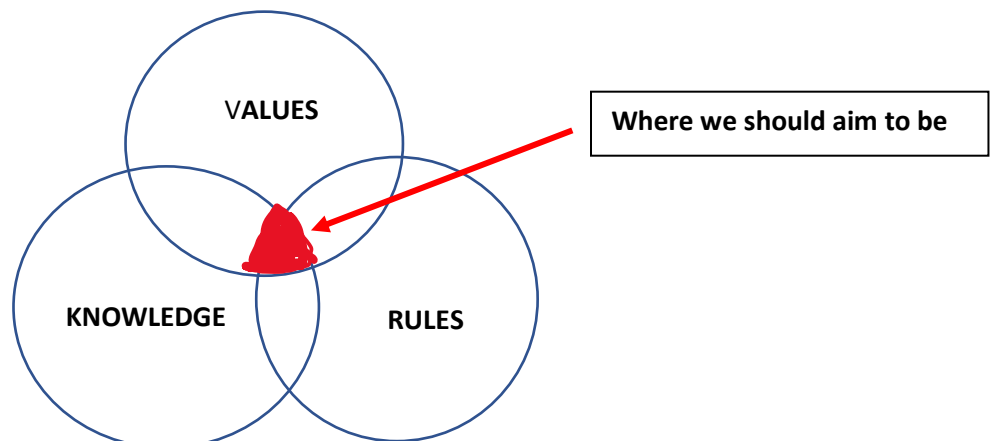


## WALLAGA LAKE HEIGHTS - Residents' bushfire planning

### Newsletter 2, 27 February 2020

Here is a brief summary of the discussions from the meeting at Kym and Graham's place on Sunday afternoon, and suggested actions:

1. The meeting concentrated on two approaches to addressing bushfires. The first was what kind of place we wanted to live in. This was wide ranging and open, identifying factors including:
  - A place that was safe from threats such as bushfire, storm and flooding;
  - A place that enhanced the natural beauty of Wallaga Lake, its surrounds, flora and fauna;
  - A community aware and respectful of each other's views, prepared to make the effort necessary to find consensus and reach optimum conclusions.
2. The meeting accepted that, until we had decided on our aims, it was premature to launch straight into the deciding what to do. There is a lot of knowledge within the group and this must be respected.
3. It was agreed that further knowledge was needed and that this could be from outside people including:
  - Far South Coast LandCare (FSCL), Chris Post. It was **AGREED**: that we should form an unincorporated group operating under the protection (and insurance policy) of FSCL. **ACTION**: an application has been made to form the Wallaga Lake Heights Community LandCare Group
  - Bermagui RFS, Tim Holsworth has said he'd like to talk to the group once things settle down with the fires
  - Indigenous leaders with expertise in cultural burning that clears the area of unwanted vegetation such as weeds sensitively, and improves the habitat for the local wildlife
  - Others with expertise in preparing for and defending from bushfire
4. To make progress we will need to look at three related elements together, illustrated in the diagram below. To work effectively we need to agree on our values, be open and respectful in gaining knowledge and respectful in selecting the rules we work under. To live in the intersection of these three elements.



5. Within this framework many suggestions were made for actions that might be appropriate to meet the community's aims. These included:
  - Clean up dangerous vegetation and material in the WLH vicinity
  - Preserve habitat for wildlife
  - Get a risk assessment done of Wallaga Lake Heights area regarding fire risk
  - Identify Wallaga Lake boundaries and develop communication with neighbouring communities.
  - Prepare plans for action with time scales of one and five years.
  - Be ready to face the 2020/21 summer's dangers.
  - Identify a safe place to evacuate for those people who choose to stay.
  - Encourage everybody to prepare or have access to a fire plan; an excellent risk assessment tool is available at <https://assessmyrisk.rfs.nsw.gov.au>
  - Continue to hold community gatherings to gather knowledge and formulate plans
  - In addition, hold less formal sessions for people to just care for each other , possibly within two weeks where people can ask – and try to answer – the question 'Are you ok?'
6. This looks like a pretty big agenda and the steering committee was encouraged to continue.
7. The updated list of names, addresses, phone and email is attached. Please check and let me know if there are any corrections needed. I have removed several emails from the list where this has been requested – if anybody else would like theirs removed please let me know. As discussed at the meeting, the list is not published on the internet and is sent only to those who have agreed to be part of the phone and email 'tree'. The fire and emergency services found such a list invaluable in supporting residents of Dignam's Creek.
8. If any of your neighbours or friends in Wallaga Lake Heights (WLH) weren't there but you think they might like to join up, please encourage them to contact us, preferably by email, with necessary details;
9. Date, time and location of next meeting(s) to be agreed and publicised

Please get back to me and other members of the steering group with comments and any information that you think will be useful.

Best wishes, WLH steering group  
Roz, Libby, Doug, Bill