



Wallaga Lake Heights community newsletter 29, 20 December 2023

What happened to the heat wave?

While the rest of the state seems to either swelter, burn or sit on roofs waiting to be evacuated from torrential rain and flooding, the far south coast seems to be different. On an unseasonably cool and drizzly December morning we are once again grateful for the place we inhabit.

Community social meeting with Bermagui Rural Fire Brigade

Ivana Gattegno's hosted a cheerful session on 25 November, well-attended by almost thirty residents. Lewis Gaha, deputy chief of the Bermagui Rural Fire Brigade gave an excellent talk covering a wide range of fire-related topics. Some of the highlights from his talk and contributions from those present included:

The St John's Ambulance Six Ps

- Lewis distributed an excellent list, prepared by St John's Ambulance, of Six Ps - things that must be considered if and when you're confronted with approaching bushfire:

1		People and pets.
2		Papers, phone numbers and important documents.
3		Prescriptions, medications and eyeglasses.
4		Pictures and irreplaceable memorabilia.
5		Personal computers/tablets, USBs, phones etc.
6		Plastic (credit cards, ATM cards) and cash.

Some thoughts on evacuation or staying and defending

- Staying and defending is much harder than you think
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- Make a plan setting out clearly the circumstances under which you would stay and defend your home and those under which you would evacuate
- Write this down and don't second guess it when a fire is bearing down on you
- You might be in an evacuation centre for up to a week or more
- You might be trapped in traffic
- Power might be out everywhere
- Note for the door or on the letterbox saying that you've left and a mobile number to contact you
- Make sure there's enough fuel in the car

What's in your fire plan?

Lewis distributed a mini-handout – we have copies for anyone who wants them or they're available from the fire station. A couple of important points

- Decision to stay or go
- House preparation and garden plantings that reduce fire risk
- Immediate and longer-term preparations
- Who is responsible and when will they be carried out
- What should you have in the grab bag you pick up as you leave the house
- Wear cotton or wool clothing, leather boots?

Fire load reduction on the lake foreshore and on private properties

At the meeting advice from the RFS was that reducing fire load on public land – such as the lake foreshore – is the responsibility of council. The council is also the go-to organisation to deal with complaints about excessive fire load on private properties.

After extensive discussion the meeting endorsed the proposal that Heights Care steering group take this up with Bega Valley as a matter of urgency. As a result council was approached and responded within a few days, agreeing to appoint a contractor to clear fallen trees from the lake side path and spread the cut timber alongside the path. This has left a lot of flammable material on the ground, and further approaches are being made to have it removed.

Land Care work on the lake foreshore

Over the summer this work tends to reduce to watering where necessary and weeding where needed. The rains have helped with the first of these and increased the need for the second. Wallaga Lake Land Care was represented at the Far South Coast Land Care AGM at the beginning of December, giving a brief presentation on the work carried out during the year and plans for 2024.

We hope this is helpful and are always on the look-out for new members. If you or anyone you know would like to join, have any comments or queries please contact us at admin@heightscare.org.au.

A happy holiday season to all and best wishes for a peaceful and prosperous 2024

Best wishes, Heights Care steering group,

Roz Bannon

Peter Campbell

Ivana Gattegno

Alison Kuitert

Doug Mein

Olga Nielsen

Bill Southwood

Bushfire preparation – some suggestions

What's in your grab and go bag? Some suggestions, more welcome

Best if it's a backpack, to leave your hands free

- Licence/Photo ID is essential
- Insurance documentation/Wills (though this might be in the Cloud)
- Cash
- Medication and prescriptions
- Eating gear
- Lewis' Six P list above– a full page sheet for printing is attached to this newsletter.
- Toilet paper and trowel
- Torch for each person, including kids
- First aid kit
- Washing powder
- Dry Food
- Water
- Phone chargers
- Emergency portable radio and charger or spare batteries
- Fire blanket
- Clothing: underpants, T shirts, socks
- Toiletries
- Shower jacket

What to wear? More suggestions welcome

- Broad brimmed hat
- Goggles
- Wool scarf or mask for breathing
- No nylon
- Sturdy boots
- Riggers gloves
- High collar