

Get Ready! for summer

Here is some helpful information and great activities you can do to get ready for summer.



GET READY!
Blue Mountains

It's time to Get Ready!

The effect of Black Summer fires are still with many of us. And the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic changed the way we supported each other to recover.

It also changes the way we need to think about what emergency preparedness means for us this year. Conversations about emotional preparedness and building resilience will be as important as those conversations about preparing our properties, developing our fire plans, and packing our emergency kits.

Fire season is on us already, so it's time to be seriously thinking, and talking, about emergency preparedness and getting ready.

Taking steps to get ready doesn't need to be a daunting task. All you need to do is find an activity that suits you, and decide what your next step to get ready will be. For example:

- Will you talk to your family, or your neighbours, about what you will do if fire threatens your neighbourhood?
- Will you add one new action this year to better prepare your home and your family?
- Are you also prepared for severe storms?
- You could take a moment to familiarise yourself with what each of the new National Bushfire Alert Levels mean.
- You can decide you will get your information from trusted sources this summer, and download the 'Fires Near Me' and 'Storms Near Me' apps.
- You could check in with friends and neighbours, or Headspace or Wellbeing Steppers, to develop strategies for managing the anxiety that comes to many of us with fire season, and may be compounded by the isolation many of us are feeling after nearly two years of various COVID restrictions.

Whichever steps you decide to take, now is the time to start having these important conversations.



Are you OK? it's important, and help is out there

Were you or someone you know affected by the Black Summer Bushfires? Rebuilding takes time and talking to someone can help.

Do you find yourself avoiding things or activities that remind you of bushfires? Are you having trouble falling or staying asleep?

Does the smell of smoke, or the sound of sirens or helicopters make your heart race? Do you feel restless, irritable or tense and you're not sure why?

Have you experienced a loss of hope or interest in the future? It's OK to not be OK, and you don't have to live this way forever.

Free Telehealth, face-to-face and phone support is available. Talk to your GP for more information or visit nbmfn.com.au/TalkToYourDoctor



Pack an emergency kit

Pack an emergency kit and scan the QR code to make sure you haven't left anything out.



Need help with apps?

Follow the easy step-by-step video guide from the Blackheath Area Neighbourhood Centre's Cyber_Shed program. Access the video (from 22 October) at banc.org.au



Take the Are you Ready or Not? quiz

We can't always stop emergencies from happening, but we can get ready for them. Use this simple tool from the Red Cross to help you prepare: redcross.org.au/prepare

You can also take the *Are you Ready or Not?* quiz to see how prepared you are.



Get the kids involved - Pillow Preparedness Packs

Belong Blue Mountains, with the support of the Red Cross and NSW RFS, will be distributing information to help you kick start conversations with your family about what Get Ready! means for you. Having conversations now gives you the opportunity to identify what is important to you as a family and what you need to be better prepared in the future.

Being emotionally prepared is just as important as practical steps, and involving the whole family in making a plan goes a long way to reducing anxieties in relation to fires and other possible disasters.

The Belong Blue Mountains Get Ready! Pillowcase Preparedness Packs will include resources to help you make a fire plan, prepare your property, prepare your pets, and to support you to involve your children in these important conversations.

Register for your FREE INFORMATION PACK (and Pillow Case) by scanning the QR code, or contact Belong Blue Mountains on 4759 2592 or at info@belongbm.org.au.



Get Ready for Summer Expo!

As we enter the summer storm and bush fire seasons, it's the perfect time to get informed and get prepared.

Register for Council's free online *Get Ready for Summer Expo* on Saturday 30 October!

At the expo you'll hear from expert presenters who will provide practical advice to help us build resilience and be more prepared.

You'll learn how to stay informed and where to find reliable information, and what we can do to look after our community, the wildlife and beautiful environment in which we all live.

bmcc.nsw.gov.au/Get-Ready-BlueMountains



Don't forget your pets

The furry members of the family need a plan too. Scan the QR code to find out how to keep your animals safe.



Pop-up mental health clinic

Headspace Bushfire Recovery Service is happy to announce an online pop-up mental health clinic for Blue Mountains students over 12 years old.

What: Online sessions available for anyone who feels they might need someone to chat to about issues that are troubling them or for mental health support.

When: Every Tuesday with appointments available from 9am to 5pm.

How: Call Simone on 0438871120 or email sthorne@uniting.org.au



Catholic Care

We're again offering a FREE session with our Digital Mentor, who can take you through the steps to download and install vital apps like Fires Near Me and My Fire Plan, to your personal device. This can be done remotely via Zoom, by phone or 1-1 in person as restrictions allow.

Give us a call on 8843 2545 or email springwood@ccss.org.au to book in with our digital mentor. Counselling is also available.



What you can do now to Get Ready! for storm season

- Secure or put away items that could blow around.
- Clean your gutters, down pipes and drains regularly to prevent blockages.
- Trim trees and branches that could fall and damage your property.
- Fix any damage to your home, including broken tiles

During a storm

- Listen to ABC 702 and other media for weather warnings.
- Stay clear of creeks, drains, causeways, gutters, streams, fallen trees and powerlines, and damaged buildings.

For emergency help in floods and storms, call the NSW SES on 132 500. If it's life threatening, call 000 immediately.

Blue Mountains SES volunteers

The volunteers of the NSWSES Blue Mountains Unit have already attended to over 100 calls for assistance since the start of August as winds caused damage across the whole region. Our members have prepared for the oncoming Summer Storm Season where we often experience heavy rain falls and



Get to know Fires Near Me

If you need help to download or learn how to use the app, please contact the Springwood Neighbourhood Centre Co-operative and a Digital Mentor will be able to support you.

Call 4751 3033, leave a message and someone will get back to you.



Know how to help wildlife

Local wildlife are just as at risk from bushfires and storms as we are. Knowing how to help them is critically important. WIRES have a series of excellent factsheets online, that can teach you the best ways to care for wildlife: wires.org.au/wildlife-information



National Recovery and Resilience Agency

People who have been hit by a disaster want to talk to a person, someone who understands what they are going through. The National Recovery and Resilience Agency has 'boots on the ground' through a national network of Recovery Support Officers who come from, live and work in communities across Australia. We are committed to a locally-led recovery and we're active in the Blue Mountains with our Recovery Support Officer, Michelle Locke, who lives and works in the community. To learn more about NRRRA, our programs and activities, visit recovery.gov.au.



Preparing for a bush fire is easier than you think

- 1. Trim** overhanging trees and shrubs. This can stop fire spreading to your home.
- 2. Mow** grass and remove the cuttings. Have a cleared area around your home.
- 3. Remove** material that can burn around your home (e.g. door mats, wood piles, mulch, leaves, paint, outdoor furniture).
- 4. Clear** and remove all the debris and leaves from the gutters surrounding your home. Burning embers can set your home on fire.
- 5. Prepare** a sturdy hose or hoses that will reach all around your home. Make sure you've got a reliable source of water.



Spotto hunts

Over the next month, emergency services volunteers will be placing items in local parks for you and the family to hunt for, and 'register' your finds. Scan the QR code to get involved.



Neighbourhoods unite on bushfire preparations

If the thought of getting your property ready for bushfire season daunts you, you're not alone. Not everyone has the physical or financial capacity to keep the bush at bay even if they want to. However, if neighbourhoods work together, building bushfire resilience becomes much easier.

Habitat for Humanity volunteers are resuming bushfire recovery work in the Blue Mountains and starting a new resilience phase. Register now to volunteer for the upcoming bushfire preparedness activity days: habitatnsw.rosterfy.com.au



Post suicide support

We support anyone who has been bereaved or impacted by suicide. You can access face to face, phone and online support for individuals and families. To access 24/7 phone support, call 1300 727 247.

Find out more at standbysupport.com.au

