



**Community Meeting for Gidgegannup Residents  
Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2005  
Gidgegannup Fire Station commencing 7.00 pm.**

*Come along to meet your local volunteers and join with your neighbours to learn more about BRAG.*

**Bushfire Ready Action Groups (BRAG).**

No matter where you live in Western Australia the potential for severe bush fires exists every year.

In recent years a number of significant fires have occurred close to Gidgegannup and although many of our homes have not been under direct threat the potential for a major fire in Gidgegannup is very real. In fact with heavy rains this winter and good spring growth the fire danger for the coming season will be higher than we have experienced in many years.

The Gidgegannup area covers almost 40,000 hectares and has over 1,000 lots ranging from home sites in the village to large agricultural lots. Being home to over 2,000 people the district supports a wide range of agricultural, rural and lifestyle activities, the Gidgegannup village and 3 National Parks. Although only small from a population perspective, its geographic and natural attributes make it an area of significance. The beauty of the bush, the variance in topography and recent growth in residential and lifestyle population also mean the risk of major fires has increased significantly.

Through FESA and the City of Swan, Gidgegannup has the resources of two volunteer bush fire brigades, East and West Gidgegannup, comprising eight Fire Appliances and some 70+ trained volunteer fire-fighters.

However, the **reality is that in a major bush fire emergency, a fire appliance will not be available to protect every home and every property.** This means that residents and homeowners must be responsible for their own fire safety.

**What is BRAG?**

The Bushfire Ready Action Group (BRAG) program is about local residents working together to prepare their properties and street for bush fires. Through BRAG you and your neighbours can learn about the fire risks in your area and what you can do to reduce those risks, either individually or as a group.

The aim of the BRAG program is to:

- Raise awareness of bush fire hazards.
- Provide information on bush fire behaviour and preparedness strategies.
- Reduce fire risks around the home, streets and immediate surrounding bushland.
- Give a realistic expectation of what the emergency services are capable of during a bush fire.

Groups are supported by the local Fire Services personnel (including Gidgegannup Volunteers) and are coordinated by a trained volunteer BRAG facilitator.

BRAG is flexible and community driven. Each BRAG group is unique and self governed with members deciding when, where and how often they meet and what components of the program they wish to use.

There are many benefits of forming or joining a BRAG group. Some of the more obvious ones include:

- Learning how to prepare and protect your family and property from bush fire and prepare your very own survival plan.
- Providing opportunities to meet neighbours and develop support networks.
- Reducing the cost bush fire has on life, property and the environment.

### **What is covered by BRAG?**

Some or all of the following components can be covered by BRAG:

- Bush fire awareness and preparedness training.
- Making plans to care for the elderly, disabled or other less able-bodied people in the event of fire.
- Nominating a safe house in the street for others to shelter in.
- Developing phone trees to improve the chances of receiving adequate warning of fire.
- Organising street walks so that neighbours become familiar with each others fire fighting equipment and how to use it.
- Developing and undertaking passive and active fire prevention strategies to protect life and property from bush fire.
- Bush fire survival training in the event you are trapped in your home, in a car or on foot during a bush fire incident.

### **What is happening in Gidgegannup?**

Your local fire brigades, East and West Gidgegannup, are jointly running a community awareness program to assist people understand more about fire danger and establish BRAG groups. A number of Volunteer Fire Fighters have agreed to undertake the initial Facilitators training so that they can assist interested residents establish BRAG groups in Gidgegannup and pass on the benefits of their experiences and first hand knowledge of bush fires.

However, as the fire season approaches our Volunteer Fire Fighters are likely to be kept quite busy and will not be available if we have an emergency in our area. For this reason we are also looking for residents to take on the coordination of individual groups under the support and guidance of the Brigade and City of Swan.

We will be holding a community meeting on Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> of November at the Gidgegannup Fire Station commencing at 7.00pm. The purpose of this meeting is to provide more information about BRAG, assist residents establish groups and to assign Facilitators to the groups for support.

If you would like to receive information updates by email please send your contact details to [david.cole@focused.com.au](mailto:david.cole@focused.com.au)

If you are interested in being a coordinator or would like to find out more please contact your local BRAG Coordinator listed below or visit the Volunteer Fire Brigade stand at the Gidge Show.

#### ***East Gidgegannup***

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