

Hi everyone.

A great turnout at Wednesday's meeting and many thanks to those that assisted with preparations and on the night from FESA, City of Swan and of course both East and West Gidgegannup Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades.

A big thank you to you all for great questions and your contribution to the evening.

I have attached the text of an article we hope to see in the next Gidgegram but I would like to add that the time for action is now. To all on this mailing list you have made the effort to find out more about what can be done to minimise the risk of fire and the impact on your families and properties should a fire occur. Please take the next step and put the information to good use.

- Ø Read through your Stay or Go Kit and make a plan.*
- Ø Get your family involved*
- Ø Decide if you will Stay and Defend or Go Early*
- Ø Talk with your neighbours to discuss your plans and form a Bushfire Ready Groups*
- Ø Contact the BRG Coordinators to arrange a facilitator to talk with your group and assist where needed (Groups are more way effective way to access facilitator resources but we are just as happy to assist on individual properties and small groups)*
- Ø Pass the information around so that we can get the message to everyone in Gidgegannup.*

ARE YOU BUSHFIRE READY?

On Wednesday evening (25 March 2009) over 100 Gidgegannup residents attended our community meeting at the fire station.

There was no doubt that the severity of the bushfires in Victoria last month had a major impact and has prompted people to take a closer look at their own preparations and action plan should Gidgegannup experience a major fire emergency.

Whilst the factors that contributed to the intensity of the Victorian fires do not generally exist in Gidgegannup it would be wrong for us to suggest the same thing would not happen here. More importantly even smaller incidents can have a serious impact on residents, properties and the community and for each of us to be appropriately prepared is the most effective way we can minimise this risk. Working together in smaller groups and as a community will ensure that any fire emergencies can be dealt with swiftly and before major loss occurs.

For those who attended the meeting the primary message was preparation and for each property to have an action plan. It is not too late to formulate a plan now, take preventative action for the rest of the 2008/09 fire season and to effectively prepare for 2009/10. It generally does not take a great deal of effort to improve the protection of your properties and most action items will involve basic building and garden maintenance and the checking of equipment and supplies. Again the most important aspect of your plan is the

plan itself and making the decision now if you are **Preparing to Stay and Defend OR Preparing to Go Early**.

Going Early. The key to this strategy is exiting the danger area well in advance of any fire front to ensure your own safety, the safety of others and of course our volunteer fire fighters. When a serious fire approaches many of the normal exit routes may be dangerous if the decision to leave is left too late. Your action plan will help you assess these risks well before you need to use them and therefore you will be able to exit the area calmly and safely.

Help is available through the combined efforts of the East and West Gidgegannup Volunteer Bush Fire Brigades. We have trained and experienced facilitators willing to assist groups of residents in their preparations and to:

- Ø Raise awareness of bush fire hazards
- Ø Provide information on bush fire behaviour and available preparedness strategies
- Ø Reduce the fire risks around the home, streets and surrounding area
- Ø Provide a realistic expectation on what emergency services are capable of during a bush fire
- Ø Support you prepare and protect your family & property in the event of a bush fire
- Ø Provide an opportunity to meet neighbours and develop support networks
- Ø Reduce the cost of bush fire on life, property, the environment and emergency services

Did you know?

There are three stages of a fire where your property is at risk;

- Ø From an advancing fire – high risk of ember attack
- Ø As the fire front passes – radiant heat as well as direct fire contact
- Ø When the fire has passed – a high risk of ember attack remains for some time

Past research has shown

- Ø Houses have survived the fire front and protected occupants from the fire
- Ø Occupants have successfully defended their houses before, during and after the fire front
- Ø Last minute evacuation is the most dangerous option of all
- Ø Cars provide extremely poor protection from fire. A large number of people lost their lives in Victoria in their cars
- Ø It is important that people realise that leaving early means leaving well before the fire front arrives at the property

All residents are encouraged to discuss bush fire prevention within their household and with their neighbours. Groups, and individuals, can then contact the brigades (see details below) and have a facilitator work with the

group providing support with risk assessment, planning and education for individual properties, streets and areas.

For a more detailed understanding of bush fire behaviour and how to protect your family and property your Volunteer Brigades recommend you form a Bushfire Ready Group and request a facilitator address the group and assist with you planning.

As a minimum each family and property should obtain a copy of FESA's "Prepare to stay and defend or Go Early" kit and work through the information and planning checklists provided. Kits can be requested from our coordinators below or as a download from www.fesa.wa.gov.au

For more information or to arrange a facilitator to address your Group please contact your local Bushfire Ready Group Coordinators:

East Gidgegannup

David Cole

Phone: 0409 746 425

Email: david.cole@focused.com.au

West Gidgegannup

John Mangini

Phone: 0427 770 003

To be added to the Bushfire Ready Group mailing list please send an email request to David Cole. Periodic updates and additional information will be provided.

Be safe, prepare and if your strategy is to Go Early don't delay GO EARLY.

David Cole

BRG Coordinator

Kind regards

David Cole

BRG Coordinator

East Gidgegannup Volunteer Bush Fire Brigade

Are you Bushfire Ready?