

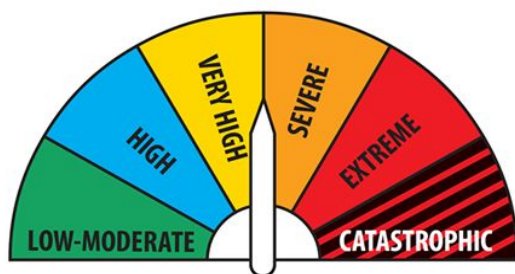


Tuross Head Rural Fire Brigade

As the embers slowly die down from a couple of local fires you are probably well aware that the bush fire season has started early this year. You may also have heard of the significant changes to Fire Danger Ratings and public warnings being introduced as a result of extensive consultation between the RFS, other NSW agencies and our interstate counterparts in the wake of the Victorian bushfires and the interim recommendations of the Royal Commission.

One of the most significant changes which you'll notice is the introduction of a new Fire Danger Rating system which will allow the delivery of clearer information, advice and warnings to the public.

The new 'Catastrophic' rating will apply on days when the Fire Danger Index is above 100 (*see note below). This new rating has been added in recognition that these conditions - like those we recently saw in Victoria and in Canberra in 2003 - present a greater level of danger to the community. It is on these days, historically, that fires have caused significant destruction.



During these conditions, advice to the community will be very clear. On these days, there is the potential for significant loss of life and property and even homes which are well prepared and built to the highest standards of construction may be destroyed. The safest course of action for people will be to leave early. Those who choose to stay and defend their properties should understand and accept the very real risks involved.

These new Fire Danger Ratings will also lead to specific alerts and advice for the public, based on the time of impact and the fire's potential. These alerts will take the following form:

- Emergency Warning – where there is the highest level of risk to life, using the Standard Emergency Warning Signal on radio, television and the RFS website and 1800 information line
- Watch and Act – where people need to be aware of a fire and take action to prepare themselves, their family and neighbours
- Advice – to keep people informed and up to date with developments.

Clearly, these are significant changes and will have flow-on effects through our organisation and the community and there is a major public information campaign being planned to explain these changes to the community.

This will focus on the new nationally consistent message: **PREPARE . ACT . SURVIVE**

* In case you aren't aware of what we mean when we say that "the Fire Danger Index is above 100", want to support your local Brigade in its activities or would like to join, then meet with members of the Tuross Head Rural Fire Brigade down at the shopping centre on the morning of **Saturday 26 September (RFS Open Day)**. If however you are busy fishing, golfing, bowling, surfing, gardening or otherwise involved that morning then the welcome mat is always out in Drake Street any Wednesday evening between 5:30 and 7:30pm.

Michael Jones
Publicity Officer
44738671