

Bushfire Action Week highlights community preparation

If anyone knows how tough and challenging bushfires can be, Roleystone resident Christine Cairns does.

A Bushfire Ready Coordinator and member of the Roleystone Bush Fire Brigade, she was directly impacted by February's Roleystone fire.

During Bushfire Action Week from October 16-24, Christine told her story in the hope it would motivate others and show them that good preparation could help save their home and those of their neighbours.

While providing radio communications assistance during the incident, Christine learnt that her daughter's house had burnt down after an evaporative air conditioning unit caught fire from ember attack.

Bushfire Action Week is about raising awareness in the community and called for people to prepare for the hazard, as the State heads into another tough bushfire season.

It commenced with a media launch at Christine's home where she led former Emergency Services Minister Rob Johnson on a tour of her property.

The Minister saw the steps taken to prepare for the bushfire season including clearing vegetation and planting fire retardant vegetation, installing guards on gutters to keep leaves and bark out,

blocking gaps in the roof, and having an independent water supply.

The launch was also attended by the Environment Minister Bill Marmion, Chief Executive Officer Mr Wayne Gregson APM and Acting Chief Operations Officer Lloyd Bailey.

Mr Gregson said it provided the community with an opportunity to start preparing themselves and their families for the season ahead.

"Bushfire Action Week prompts householders to start thinking about whether their preparations are adequate and consider what else they need to do," he said.

"It complements the work of FESA which liaises with local governments and Bushfire Ready Groups to propel people into action.

"Research shows that the community is more likely to prepare if they have engaged with or are a part of their local Bushfire Ready Group."

The resilience of the community was also boosted by public information forums, bush fire brigade open days, street meets, door knocks, displays and information stalls, as well as Bushfire Ready meetings.



Absentee landowners ready for bushfire risk

Absentee landowners targeted in the lead up to the bushfire season were given a helping hand with a series of forums held throughout the metropolitan area during October and November. A record number of people attended the sessions, with many at capacity.

FESA Community Engagement, in collaboration with the Operations portfolio, hosted the forums attended by city based residents with investment properties and holiday homes in regional areas.

Community Engagement Director Suellen Shea said the aim was to enable owners who may not reside permanently at their country properties, to learn more about the bushfire risk in the area and what they need to do to make them safe before the bush fire season started.

"We contacted a total of 10,500 landowners, and it was great to see so many people respond and take an interest in hearing about the risks associated with bushfires," Suellen said.

"Attendees learnt what to do about increasing safety around their property, while also taking the opportunity to seek advice about their existing fire preparation.

"The more education people have, the more likely they are to take action to protect their home."

Issues discussed included asset protection, bushfire survival plans, fire danger ratings, water and power supply, hazard separation zones and ember protection.

As well as urging absentee landowners to make sure that property maintenance was carried out before the onset of summer, forum presenters from regional areas emphasised to attendees the importance of an adequate bushfire survival plan that included visitors or tenants.