



NEW RESOURCES – Cyclone and Flood Lesson Plans and Resources



Western Australia is vulnerable to cyclones and floods. These hazards can cause death and injuries, isolate communities, damage major infrastructure, cut essential services and destroy property and livelihoods.

On average five cyclones occur off Western Australia's north-west coast each year, of these, two directly impact the coast and affect local communities.

Flooding can happen anywhere, at any time and from a variety of water sources including rivers and creeks, storm tides, overflowing catchments and heavy rainfall caused by cyclones and storms.

It is important that our students are aware of the risks these hazards pose to them and their communities and are taught how to prepare and respond to them, to help save lives and minimise property damage.

DFES has recently redeveloped their upper primary school Cyclone and Flood lessons, which aim to raise students' understanding and awareness of cyclones and floods, enabling them to learn how to prepare their homes and plan for emergencies and help keep their families and the wider community safe.

These **NEW** resources can be found on the DFES [School Education webpage](#).

PICTON BUSHFIRE – All it takes is one cigarette



On March 10 2018, a south-west resident allegedly dropped a cigarette butt into bushland in the suburb of Picton. Within minutes, it was burning out of control and not long after, threatening the lives and properties of nearby residents, forcing people to evacuate their homes.

This event highlights two important points. Firstly, that many of our bushfires are preventable, and secondly, that it only takes one small spark and unfavourable weather conditions to create a dangerous out of control bushfire.

You can use this recent fire in a discussion with students to focus on the following key messages:

- Many bushfires are preventable. Safe campfire behaviour, disposing of cigarettes appropriately and not playing with matches and lighters are just some ways students can prevent fires.
- All big fires start as small fires and can spread quickly. This [video](#) is a great resource to demonstrate to students just how quickly fires can spread.
- Children must tell an adult immediately or call Triple Zero (000) if there is a fire, even if they are involved in lighting the fire themselves.

BUSHFIRE PATROL – Key research findings



Bushfire Patrol is DFES's bushfire education program for schools in the Southwest Land Division of Western Australia. A recent evaluation of the program by Dr Briony Towers, from the Bushfire and Natural Hazard Cooperative Research Centre, has provided DFES with some interesting research, which will assist in the redevelopment of this resource.

Most importantly, the evaluation identified that a teacher-delivered bushfire education program like *Bushfire Patrol* has huge potential to increase children's knowledge and awareness of bushfire safety and to encourage them to promote bushfire planning and preparedness in their homes.

Another particularly important finding of the evaluation identified that children's bushfire-related fears appeared to decrease as a result of the program. Children generally felt that the program had provided them with valuable knowledge and skills for staying safe in a bushfire and as a consequence, they felt less afraid.

Key recommendations from the evaluation will now be incorporated into the re-write of *Bushfire Patrol*, set for release towards the end of the year. Make sure to keep your eye out for information about the release of these new resources in future teacher updates.

WOW (WEAR ORANGE WEDNESDAY) DAY – Wednesday 23 May 2018



Over 2,000 dedicated State Emergency Service (SES) volunteers across Western Australia play a vital role in keeping the community safe during natural disasters and emergencies.

The SES make emergency repairs to buildings damaged by cyclones, storms and floods. They can transport cargo and passengers across floodwaters. The SES conduct land searches, aerial and cave rescues, attend road crashes and much more.

To celebrate and show support for the hard working SES volunteers, everyone is encouraged to wear bright orange on WOW Day. This would be a great time for students to connect with their local SES unit and thank them for their hard work. You might also like to invite them to visit your students to talk about their role and the importance of community volunteering. To find your local SES unit, please visit the [DFES website](#). Please remember they are volunteers and may not always be available to talk to your students.

RESILIENT SCHOOL AWARDS – Entries now open

Has your school been involved in a project that has strengthened student resilience towards disasters? If so, you should consider applying for the Resilient Australia School Award, with applications for 2018 now open. The Resilient Australia Awards is a nation-wide program to recognise and promote initiatives that strengthen community disaster resilience and includes a category for schools. The Resilient Australia School Award is open to all public and private pre-school, primary and secondary schools. To find out more, visit the [Australian Institute for Disaster Resilience](#) website.

Contacts

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Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Fire & Emergency Services**



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