

DOCUMENT ID	
APPLICABLE TO	Rosary Park Primary School, Branxton
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APPROVAL DATE	
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LAST REVIEW DATE/S	22/06/2020
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RELATED DOCUMENTS	

ISSUED

Bush Fire Survival Plan

Prepare Act Survive

Reducing the impact of bush fires is a shared responsibility between government, the emergency services and the community. Individual schools play an integral role in taking the necessary steps to prepare the school properties, students, parents/care givers and staff for the threat of bush fire in their local area

This Bush Fire Survival Plan sets out the following key components

- **Prepare** - To identify potential bush fire emergencies and implement elimination or control measures to prevent those bush fire emergencies, where possible
- **Act** - To enable effective preparation for bush fire emergencies through appropriate training of personnel, testing of equipment and practice of evacuation drills
- **Survive** -To provide staff and students with a clear understanding of how to respond effectively in the event of an bush fire emergency

This Bush Fire Survival Plan is a subset of the Sites Emergency Management Plan and should be read in conjunction with that plan.

The Bush Fire Survival Plan has been developed in conjunction with NSW Fire & Rescue, NSW Rural Fire Services and has included processes and systems from both NSW Fire & Rescue and the Rural Fire Services

Diocese of Maitland Newcastle	6.3.7.7 Bush Fire Survival Plan	Revision No. 0	Error! No
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1.0 Description of the Workplace			
Site	Rosary Park Primary School Branxton		
Address	Station Street Branxton NSW 2335		
Latitude	-32.658415	Longitude	151.345651
No. of Students	318	No. of Staff	34
No. of Students with Support Needs	0	Catering for	K to Year 6
No. of Buildings	14	Hours of Operation	8.00am to 3.30pm Weekdays
Office Phone	(02) 4938 1541	Office Email	admin@branxton.catholic.edu.au
Website (if available)	www.branxton.catholic.edu.au		
OOSH Onsite (Y/N)	Y	Hours of Operation	6.30am to 6pm Weekdays

Key Bush Fire Survival Strategy	EVACUATE EARLY
Backup Plan	Evacuate to the Main Assembly Hall

2.0 Site Plan

Note 1: - Russell Earthmoving have approx. 44,000 litres of diesel fuel and approx. 2,200 litres of unleaded fuel onsite





Note 2: - Ausgrid has a major Substation in close proximity to the School





If an issue was to occur with either of these sites, evacuation to Branxton Golf Club should be considered as per the **Section 7.3** of this Bush Fire Survival Plan and the Schools Emergency Management Plan

3.0 Site Emergency Contact(s)			
Contact	Position/Role	Phone (BH)	Mobile
Sallyanne Stanbridge	Principal	(02) 4938 1541	0410 487 331
Louise Kevin	Assistant Principal	(02) 4938 1541	
Jane Johansen Kim O'Rourke	School Officers (Clerical)	(02) 4938 1541	

4.0 Roles & Responsibilities			
Role	Name	Phone	Responsible for
Principal	Sallyanne Stanbridge	0410 487 331	Chief Warden
Assistant Principal	Louise Kevin	(02) 4938 1541	Deputy Chief Warden
School Officers (Clerical)	Jane Johansen Kim O'Rourke	(02) 4938 1541	Communications Officer

5.0 Emergency Contacts/Resources		
Agency Service	Emergency Situation	Phone Number/Website
Fire, Police, Ambulance	Fire or Emergency	000
NSW Rural Fire Service	Bushfire Information Line	1800 679 737 www.rfs.nsw.gov.au Fires Near Me App Facebook.com/nswrfs Twitter.com/nswrfs
NSW Rural Fire Service Lower Hunter District	Local Bush Fire Information	(02) 4015 0000 or Leanne Bell 0428 343 402
State Emergency Operations Centre	Natural Disaster	1300 677 677
Bureau of Meteorology (BOM)	Fire Weather Information	www.bom.gov.au
Branxton Fire & Rescue Station	Fire (Local)	(02) 4938 3396
Hunter Valley Police District, Singleton Police Station	Police (Local)	(02) 6578 7499
Catholic Schools Office	Assistant Director	0407 700 673
Catholic Diocese	Safety & Wellness Business Partner	0472 500 799
Ausgrid	Substation Failure	13 1388
Russell Earthmoving	Local Neighbour with Diesel Fuel Load	(02) 4938 1340 Email admin@lesrussell.com.au Emergency Contact Mark Kelly (GM) Landline (02) 4938 1340 Mobile 0428 494 307 Email kel@lesrussell.com.au

6.0 Pre-emptive Procedures	
Evaluation of bushfire risk and the safety of occupants has determined that the following pre-emptive measures should be implemented outside of normal bushfire conditions.	
Trigger(s)	Actions
<p>Pre-Bush Fire Season Education – Parent/Care Giver Education</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">1. DISCUSS</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communicate the Bush Fire Survival Plan to Parents/Care Givers and what to expect if a Bush Fire emergency was to be invoked 2. Have Parents/Care Givers consider how they would collect their Children at short notice – alternative options etc. 3. Explain expectations of what they are required to do
<p>Pre-Bush Fire Season Education – Staff Education</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">1. DISCUSS</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communicate the Bush Fire Survival Plan to Staff 2. Discuss with Staff the importance of monitoring and evacuating early 3. Have the Staff consider their own situations and how they will manage their school accountabilities with any personal ones
<p>Pre-Bush Fire Season Education – Student Education</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">1. DISCUSS</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Invite the local Rural Bush Fire Brigade to attend site and discuss Fire Safety with Students 2. Carryout at least two (2) Bush Fire Drills prior to the Bush Fire Season <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Evacuate to the normal Evacuation Assembly Point – front of school near Main Administration Building b. Evacuate to the Main Assembly Hall 3. Carryout education sessions with students on what to do in a Bush Fire Situation (refer to the RFS Website for material and this link)
<p>Pre Bush Fire Season Preparation</p>  <p style="text-align: center;">2. PREPARE</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide Branxton Fire & Rescue and Muswellbrook Local Area Police Command with a copy of this Bush Fire Survival Plan 2. Inspection and maintenance of the Asset Protection Zone (APZ) surrounding the School 3. Grounds Maintenance – reduce undergrowth fuel load on the site 4. Have the local NSW Fire & Rescue and the Rural Fire Services Brigade attend site for site review – discuss back burning if required 5. Ensure gutters are cleaned regularly 6. Ensure Fire Fighting Equipment is inspected and is serviceable 7. Ensure a suitable supply of drinking water and food is available at the Main Assembly Hall/Canteen

6.0 Pre-emptive Procedures (continued)	
Trigger(s)	Actions
<p>Monitoring during the Bush Fire Season</p>  <p>3. KNOW</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Setup the “Fires Near Me” App with “Watch Zones” around the site on as many staff phones as possible 2. Assign the Clerical Staff to monitor the following closely <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. BOM website b. RFS – Fires Near Me App – setup Watch Zones c. RFS Website/Facebook/Twitter d. 1233 ABC Newcastle Radio Station
<p>Closely monitor during the Bush Fire Season – Fires have started but no immediate danger</p>  <p>ADVICE A fire has started. There is no immediate danger. Stay up to date in case the situation changes.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to monitor as above 2. Contact the RFS and advise of the situation (i.e. 318 Primary aged students plus staff) 3. Seek advice on evacuation timing 4. Discuss options with the Diocese and Assistant Director 5. Consider closing the school and evacuation 6. Consider preparing the Main Assembly Hall with water, food, wet towels under doors, additional toilet paper etc. 7. Have firefighting equipment prepared
<p>Bush Fire Activity in the General Area – Heighten level of threat</p>  <p>WATCH AND ACT There is a heightened level of threat. Conditions are changing and you need to start taking action to protect you and your family.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to monitor as above 2. Contact the RFS again and advise of the situation (i.e. 318 Primary aged students plus staff) 3. Seek advice on evacuation timing 4. Advise the Diocese and Assistant Director of intent to close the school and evacuate 5. Invoke the school closure and evacuation procedure 6. Contact the local Branxton NSW Fire & Rescue and the local RFS as well as the Muswellbrook Local Area Police Command and seek assistance to evacuate the school 7. If outside school hours consider not opening the school in the first instance
<p>Bush Fire Activity in Close Proximity – high threat level</p>  <p>EMERGENCY WARNING An Emergency Warning is the highest level of Bush Fire Alert. You may be in danger and need to take action immediately. Any delay now puts your life at risk.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evacuation should be complete by this stage 2. <i>If evacuation is not complete, utilise the Shelter On-Site procedure for those left on site – see section 8.2</i> 3. Advise the RFS, Branxton NSW Fire & Rescue and the Muswellbrook Local Area Police Command of the Schools intentions 4. Advise the Diocese and the Assistant Director of the actions being taken

7.0 Evacuation Procedures	
Evaluation of bushfire risk and the safety of Students and Staff has determined that the PRIMARY action to follow under normal bushfire conditions is to EVACUATE THE SITE.	
Trigger(s)	Actions
7.1 Evacuate Site – Students are evacuated to Parents/Care Givers care	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Advise Parents/Care Givers via Compass of the intent to evacuate 2. Set in motion the Evacuation Procedure and assemble at the nominated Emergency Assembly Point – front of school near the Main Administration Building <p style="text-align: center;">OR IF SMOKE/EMBERS PREVENT THIS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Evacuate to the Main Assembly Hall and check rolls 4. Staff to ensure all rooms are inspected, doors and windows are closed and signage indicating “Checked” is in place 5. First Aid Officers are to ensure that all Student Medications, EpiPens, First Aid Kits etc. are collected and transported to the Emergency Assembly Point 6. Clerical Staff are to put signs on the Main Administration Building Door indicating that the School is closed and has been evacuated to the relevant area – ensure that a contact Number is included on the sign 7. Assign Staff to manage traffic and student interactions – ensure that precise records of student movements are kept 8. Once evacuation is complete the Chief Warden is to check rolls for completeness and ensure all students and staff are clear of the school 9. Chief Warden to advise RFS, Branxton NSW Fire & Rescue and the Muswellbrook Local Area Police Command that the school has been evacuated 10. Chief Warden to advise the Diocese and Assistant Director that the school has been evacuated and everyone has been accounted for – including the Chief Warden

7.0 Evacuation Procedures (continued)	
Trigger(s)	Actions
7.2 Evacuate Site – Students are evacuated to the Branxton St Nicholas Early Education Centre – if it’s a safer option	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Advise Parents/Care Givers via Compass of the intent to evacuate to the Branxton St Nicholas Early Education Centre 2. Set in motion the Evacuation Procedure and assemble at the nominated Emergency Assembly Point – front of school near the Main Administration Building <p style="text-align: center;">OR IF SMOKE/EMBERS PREVENT THIS</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evacuate to the Main Assembly Hall and check rolls 2. Staff to ensure all rooms are inspected, doors and windows are closed and signage indicating “Checked” is in place 3. Contact the Braxton St Nicholas Early Education Centre Director ((02) 4979 1110) on the intent to utilise the St Nicholas Early Education Centre as the evacuation point 4. First Aid Officers are to ensure that all Student Medications, EpiPens, First Aid Kits etc. are collected and transported to the Emergency Assembly Point 5. Clerical Staff are to put signs on the Main Administration Building Door indicating that the School is closed and has been evacuated to the relevant area – ensure that a contact Number is included on the sign 6. Assign Staff to manage traffic and student interactions – ensure that precise records of student movements are kept 7. Move the Students to St Nicholas Early Education Centre 8. Once evacuation is complete the Chief Warden is to check rolls for completeness and ensure all students and staff are clear of the school 9. Chief Warden to advise RFS, Branxton NSW Fire & Rescue and the Muswellbrook Local Area Police Command that the school has been evacuated and where the Students are 10. Chief Warden to advise the Diocese and Assistant Director that the school has been evacuated and everyone has been accounted for – including the Chief Warden

Trigger(s)	Actions
<p>7.3 Evacuate Site – Students are evacuated to the Branxton Golf Club (Cessnock Road Branxton) – if it’s a safer option and time allows</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Advise Parents/Care Givers via Compass of the intent to evacuate to the Branxton Golf Club 2. Organise Bus Transport to the number of expected students to be evacuated – Bus Companies are Grace Coaches – (02) 4930 6058 or Hunter Valley Coaches - (02) 4935 7200 3. Set in motion the Evacuation Procedure and assemble at the nominated Emergency Assembly Point – front of school near the Main Administration Building OR IF SMOKE/EMBERS PREVENT THIS 4. Evacuate to the Main Assembly Hall and check rolls 5. Staff to ensure all rooms are inspected, doors and windows are closed and signage indicating “Evacuated” is in place 6. Contact the Braxton Golf Club ((02) 4938 1421) Manager on the intent to utilise the Branxton Golf Club as the evacuation point 7. First Aid Officers are to ensure that all Student Medications, EpiPens, First Aid Kits etc. are collected and transported to the Emergency Assembly Point 8. Clerical Staff are to put signs on the Main Administration Building Door indicating that the School is closed and has been evacuated to the relevant area – ensure that a contact Number is included on the sign 9. Assign Staff to manage traffic and student interactions – ensure that precise records of student movements are kept 10. Move the Students to the waiting buses – ensure the necessary number of Staff travel with students and are also positioned at the Branxton Golf Club to receive students in an orderly manner 11. Once evacuation is complete the Chief Warden is to check rolls for completeness and ensure all students and staff are clear of the school 12. Chief Warden to advise RFS, Branxton NSW Fire & Rescue and the Muswellbrook Local Area Police Command that the school has been evacuated and where the Students are 13. Chief Warden to advise the Diocese and Assistant Director that the school has been evacuated and everyone has been accounted for – including the Chief Warden
<p>7.4 Evacuation Assembly Points</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Normal Emergency Assembly Point – Front of School near the Main Administration Building 2. If Smoke or Ember prevents this then assemble in the Main Assembly Hall
<p>7.5 Off- Site Shelter</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. St Nicholas Early Education Centre (assuming reduced Fire Risk) 2. Branxton Golf Club – To be used as the last option as organisation of buses etc will take some time
<p>7.6 Evacuation Transportation Arrangements</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Walk to St Nicholas Early Education Centre (assuming reduced Fire Risk)
<p>8.0 Shelter in Place Procedures</p>	
<p>Evaluation of bushfire risk and the safety of Students and Staff has determined that the SECONDARY action to follow under normal bushfire conditions is to evacuate to the MAIN ASSEMBLY HALL.</p>	
<p>8.1 Shelter On-Site Refuge(s) Location</p>	<p>Main Assembly Hall</p>

8.2 Sheltering Procedures

Trigger(s)	Actions
Unable to evacuate Students/Staff offsite	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Advise Parents/Care Givers via Compass of the intent to Shelter in the Main Assembly Hall 2. Set in motion the Evacuation Procedure and assemble at the Main Assembly Hall and check rolls 3. Staff to ensure all rooms are inspected, doors and windows are closed and signage indicating "Checked" is in place 4. First Aid Officers are to ensure that all Student Medications, EpiPens, First Aid Kits etc. are collected and transported to the Main Assembly Hall 5. Clerical Staff are to put signs on the Main Administration Building Door indicating that the School is closed and has been evacuated to the Main Assembly Hall – All access is via the doors facing the carpark – ensure that a contact Number is included on the sign 6. Once evacuation is complete the Chief Warden is to check rolls for completeness and ensure all students and staff are accounted for 7. Have Staff place wet towels under all doors and continue to wet down the Main Assembly Hall Roof and surrounding areas – if it's safe to do so 8. Chief Warden to advise RFS, Branxton NSW Fire & Rescue and the Muswellbrook Local Area Police Command that the school is Sheltering On-Site 9. Chief Warden to advise the Diocese and Assistant Director that the school is Sheltering On-Site in the Main Assembly Hall




9.0 General Attachments**9.1 Plan Distribution**

Agency/Role	Delivery Method
Rosary Park PS, Branxton	Primary Document
Branxton NSW Fire & Rescue	Email - Ian.Stevenson@fire.nsw.gov.au
NSW Rural Fire Service Lower Hunter District	Email – Leanne.bell@rfs.nsw.gov.au
Muswellbrook Local Area Police Command	Email – Town1deb@police.nsw.gov.au
Russell Earthmoving – Key Neighbour	Email - kel@lesrussell.com.au
Safety & Wellness Business Partner	Email - wayne.carman@mn.catholic.org.au

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9.2 Additional Emergency Contacts:	
Name	Number
Emergency Services- KEY CONTACT	000
Branxton Fire Station	(02) 4938 3396
NSW Rural Fire Service Lower Hunter District	(02) 4015 0000 or Leanne Bell 0428 343 402
Hunter Valley Police District, Singleton Police Station	(02) 6578 7499
NSW Rural Fire Service – Emergency	000
NSW Rural Fire Service - Branxton	(02) 4938 3396
State Emergency Services	13 25 00
John Hunter Hospital	(02) 4921 3000
Poisons Information Centre	13 11 26
Hunter Water	1300 657 000
Ausgrid	13 13 88
Russell Earthmoving – local neighbour with fuel storage	(02) 4938 1340 / 0428 494 307
Bus Companies	Grace Coaches – (02) 4930 6058 or Hunter Valley Coaches - (02) 4935 7200
St Nicholas Early Education Centre - Branxton	(02) 4979 1110
Branxton Golf Club	(02) 4938 1421
Parish Priest – Fr Thomas Chirackal	(02) 5507 4048
Bishop of CDMN – Bishop William Wright	(02) 4979 1111
Director of Schools – Gerard Mowbray	0427 683 297
Assistant Director – Chris Quinn	0407 700 673
Coordinator Student Wellbeing – Emma Merlino	0409 081 701
Head of Human Resources – Sophie Smith	0447 341 213
Head of Safety & Wellness Team – Peter Roberts	0477 016 701
Head of Communications Team – John Kingsley-Jones	0419 263 901
Head of Property Team – Ray Bowen	0447 014 400
Head of Technology Services – Craig Stevenson	0439 478 233
Parent Liaison Officer – Catherine Garrett-Jones	0409 791 303
Office of Safeguarding	(02) 4979 1390
Access EAP	1800 613 155

10.0 Resource Material:	
Teaching Assistance Material	RFS Primary School Materials
Fire Mesh for exposed eaves/ventilation hoods etc	Australian Standard for steel mesh to cover the vents is described in AS3959 and details the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o mesh or perforated sheet with a maximum aperture of 2mm, made of corrosion-resistant steel, bronze or aluminium.

11.0 Principal's Quick Guide:				
	EMERGENCY WARNING ALERT	WATCH AND ACT ALERT	ADVICE ALERT	
FIRE DANGER RATING				NO FIRE
CATASTROPHIC	1	1	1	1
EXTREME	1	2	2	3
SEVERE	2	2	3	4
VERY HIGH	2	3	4	4
HIGH	3	4	4	5
LOW MODERATE	4	4	5	5

Bush Fire Matrix Score	
1	<p>Schools on Bush Fire Register – High Risk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For Schools on the Bush Fire Register, implement Temporarily Ceasing School Operations procedures <p>Schools Bush Fire Prone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> For Bush Fire Prone schools, implement your <i>Bush Fire Survival Plan</i> If there is NO FIRE review your <i>Bush Fire Survival Plan</i> Brief the school Communicate to your community
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement your <i>Bush Fire Survival Plan</i> Bush Fire preparation activities are a priority of staff Brief the school Hose, taps, emergency kit and other equipment set up by 11:00am Monitor RFS Website, social media sites and local ABC Radio Check Fires Near Me app at 11:00am, 12.30pm and 2:30pm Staff keep general look out for any signs of fire in the vicinity Communicate to the community
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff reminded of their responsibilities Consider implementing your <i>Bush Fire Survival Plan</i> Brief the school If smoke affected consider indoor activities only Monitor RFS Website, social media sites and local ABC Radio Check Fires Near Me app at 12.30pm and 2:30pm Staff keep general look out for any signs of fire in the vicinity Communicate to the community
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review your <i>Bush Fire Survival Plan</i> Discuss your Plan with staff If smoke affected, consider indoor activities only Keep yourself informed and monitor conditions utilising RFS Website, Fires Near Me app, Live Traffic NSW app and local ABC Radio
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep yourself informed and monitor conditions utilising RFS Website, Fires Near Me app, Live Traffic NSW app and local ABC Radio

11.0 Principal's Quick Guide (con't):

THE BUSH FIRE ALERT LEVELS

If there is a fire in our area we will keep track of the alert level and act as follows:

ADVICE ALERT	<p>A bush fire has started, there is no immediate danger, our school will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Update student rolls and account for early leavers/absences in our school system ▪ Principal or person responsible monitors air quality and adjust school activities accordingly i.e. if smoke affected cease outdoor activities ▪ Monitor Fire Danger Ratings, <i>Fires Near Me</i> app, <i>Live Traffic NSW</i> app and local ABC Radio ▪ Adjust air conditioning onto recycle ▪ Principal or person responsible to keep parents/carers informed via Compass, Facebook or SMS
WATCH AND ACT ALERT	<p>There is a heightened level of threat and bush fire conditions are changing, in addition to the Advice Alert procedures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ If possible, Principal or person responsible to alert parents/carers the day before via Compass, Facebook or SMS. If the district is affected by heavy smoke, consider keeping students with an Asthma Plan at home. ▪ Inform all staff and parents/carers stay updated using the <i>Fires Near Me</i> app, <i>Live Traffic NSW</i> app and/or listen to local ABC Radio ▪ Principal to seek advice from Local Fire Control Centre (02 40 15 0000) and assess if sheltering or evacuation procedures within this plan are to be implemented OR if the school should start contacting parents/carers to pick students up from school and take home ▪ School will take action to prepare i.e. provide regular updates of bush fire activity to all occupants and prepare bush fire emergency equipment
EMERGENCY WARNING ALERT	<p>This is the highest level of bush fire alert.</p> <p>Our school will take action to implement our <i>Bush Fire Survival Plan</i></p> <p>The Principal or person responsible will continue liaising with Local Fire Control Centre (02 40 15 0000) and keep parents/carers informed of all actions taken by the school</p>

12.0 Rural Fire Services - Bush Fire Emergency Management Guide for Schools**BUSH FIRE EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT GUIDE FOR SCHOOLS**

Preparation and support guide

November 2016

Bush fire risk and history

Bush fires are a natural part of the natural Australian environment and occur regularly. A bush fire can be a terrifying situation. Strong gusty winds, intense heat and flames will make you tired quickly. Thick, heavy smoke will sting your eyes and choke your lungs. It will be difficult to see and breathe. The roaring sound of the fire approaching will deafen you. Embers will rain down, causing spot fires all around you. Power and water may be cut off. You may be isolated. It will be dark, noisy and extremely physically and mentally demanding.

The main risk to the school is from airborne burning embers from nearby bush fires falling onto to buildings or gardens and setting them alight. These embers have been known to travel up to 30km. There is also some risk of bush fires in adjacent bush land spreading into the school grounds. The schools best defence against bush fires is preparedness.

Preparing the school for bush fires

Preparation is not just for the building and grounds. Preparation also includes discussing the plan with staff members and reviewing the plan, practising the plan and advising the school community of the plan. It's all about 'getting ready' for the fire season. Understanding that fires can start and may escalate rapidly, it is almost impossible to predict when and where a major bush fire may occur regardless of the bush fire danger rating and place the school under threat under and making it unsafe to travel on local roads.

Lessons learnt from 2013 fire season

- Schools Bush Fire Management Plans had not been discussed with an officer of the NSW Rural Fire Service and were not adequate for the situation. Seeking advice from the NSW Rural Fire Service in regards to your plan will overcome this.
- Communication with the schools in the Blue Mountains in 2013 was made very difficult as their phone systems jammed by concerned parents. Emergency Services could not contact the schools via their advertised phone numbers to advise the school of the situation or plans made to assist them. A good communication plan will overcome this.
- Parents took great risks to themselves, their children and emergency services by driving in dangerous conditions to pick their children up from school. A good communication plan and communicating the schools bush fire plan to the school community should overcome this.
- Feedback from the community was that there was not enough information on the situation from the schools on social media and other electronic media. Including social and electronic media in your communication plan should overcome this.

Prepare

- Decide what action will be taken if the school comes under threat from bush fire – Evacuate or Stay in Place. Have a backup plan
- Review your plan with the staff and make any changes as required
- Practise your plan with the whole school
- Communicate your plan to the school community
- Prepare the school buildings and grounds for bush fire and ensure that the maintenance routine continues to maintain the school to a high standard
- Check all fire fighting equipment that it is in good working order and all staff knows how to use it
- Check the contents of your survival kit

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Preparing the school grounds and buildings

- Keep lawns short and gardens well maintained
- Cut back trees and shrubs overhanging buildings
- Clean up fallen leaves, twigs and debris around the school
- Have hoses long enough to reach around all buildings and a pump not reliant on electricity

The points below may help prevent burning embers entering the buildings

- Consider changing garden mulch to mineral to reduce the risk of fire in the gardens
- Install metal gutter guards
- Repair damaged or missing roof panels
- Fit seals around doors and windows to eliminate gaps
- Repair or cover gaps in external walls
- Attach a fire sprinkler system to gutters and near-by gardens
- Enclose the areas under the house

Act

- Check the fire danger rating each day. The higher the fire danger rating the more dangerous the conditions
- Implement the actions for the fire danger rating
- Stay informed – listen to local ABC radio (Newcastle 1233), monitor the RFS web site www.rfs.nsw.gov.au and look for other sources of information
- If you receive a bush fire alert – take it seriously and act promptly
- On hot, dry, windy days pay extra attention

Survive

- As soon as you become aware that there is a fire in your area you must put your Bush Fire Plan into action. Hesitating or taking a 'wait and see' approach could have serious consequences

Defending the school

Before the fire arrives

- Close all doors and windows
- Block spaces beneath doors and windows with wet towels
- Fill buckets, sinks and containers with water ready to put out spot fires
- Have your firefighting equipment like pumps and hoses connected to your water supply
- Block downpipes and fill gutters with water
- Remove items which can burn from around buildings like door mats and school bags
- Bring ladders inside to check roof space for embers
- Patrol outside the buildings putting out any embers or spot fires
- Just before the fire arrives, wet down timber decks and gardens close to the buildings
- Move any fire fighting equipment to a place it will not get burnt

When the fire arrives

- Go inside but stay alert
- Shelter in a room on the opposite side of the building from the approaching fire and one that has a clear exit out of the building
- Patrol inside the building, including the roof space looking for sparks and embers
- Protect yourself from the heat of the fire
- If your life (or anyone's) is at risk, call triple zero **(000)**

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Once the fire has passed

- Check your roof spaces
- Go outside and put out any part of the buildings which is alight
- Check under the buildings and any decks
- Embers and sparks can start spot fires for many hours after the fire has passed
- If you can, make contact with families

Suggestions for Bush Fire Survival Kit

- Protective clothing for any staff who will be outside patrolling the school grounds. Protective clothing includes:
 - long sleeved shirt and heavy duty pants made in natural fibres (cotton, denim or wool) or long sleeve overalls
 - Sturdy leather foot wear (work boots)
 - Wide brimmed hat to stop embers from dropping onto your head or down the back of your shirt
 - Work gloves to protect your hands
 - Goggles to safeguard your eyes against smoke, embers and debris
 - Smoke mask or wet cloth to cover your nose and mouth to protect you from inhaling smoke and embers
- Battery operated radio and spare batteries
- Torches and spare batteries
- Drinking water
- Woollen blankets
- Fire extinguishers
- First aid kit
- Hoses and fire fighting equipment
- Shovel
- Ladder
- Towels
- Buckets
- Mop

Example of Triggers for schools Response to Bush Fire Plan

Table 1: Actions for all of term 1 and term 4. Fire Danger Rating: Low/Med, High, Very High

Notify	Actions
Nil	Pump and hoses to be tested at least monthly by General Assistant All building gutters and roofs cleared of leaves at the beginning of Term 4 and Term 1 by Contractor Grounds to be kept free of debris and disposed of correctly At least one evacuation drill is held each term including one bush fire evacuation drill Notice to be included in the school's newsletter at the beginning of Term 4 and Term 1 advising parents not to try to collect their children from the school during a bushfire unless requested by the school or the Rural Fire Service as it may cause increased traffic congestion that may hinder the movement of emergency vehicles.

Table 2: Fire Danger Rating is Severe OR fire within 10kms of school requiring six (6) tankers OR Alert Level is Advice

Notify	Actions
School Staff Area Director	<p>If burning embers land on the school grounds calls triple zero (000) immediately</p> <p>Stay informed – listen to local ABC radio (Newcastle 1233), monitor the RFS web site www.rfs.nsw.gov.au and look for other sources of information</p> <p>School Principal (or delegate) to contact Lower Hunter Fire Control Centre on 4015 0000 at 1pm and 3pm to ascertain if any fires are occurring near the school or near major transport routes</p> <p>School staff to keep a general look out for any fires in the vicinity</p>

Table 3: Fire Danger Rating is Extreme OR fire within 5kms of school requiring ten (10) tankers OR Alert Level is Watch and Act OR a Total Fire Ban for the district has been declared

Notify	Actions
School Staff Area Director	<p>NO FIRES OF ANY DESCRIPTION ARE TO BE LIT OUTSIDE</p> <p>If burning embers land on the school grounds calls triple zero (000) immediately</p> <p>Bush fire preparation activities are to be the priority of all staff</p> <p>Bush Fire plan to be discussed with all staff before the start of school</p> <p>All hoses and pumps to be set up and checked by 11am</p> <p>All building gutters and roofs cleared of leaves before 11am</p> <p>Fire fighting equipment to be set up</p> <p>Stay informed – listen to local ABC radio (Newcastle 1233), monitor the RFS web site www.rfs.nsw.gov.au and look for other sources of information</p> <p>School Principal (or delegate) to contact Lower Hunter Fire Control Centre on 4015 0000 at 11am, 1pm and 3pm to ascertain if any fires are occurring near the school or near major transport routes</p> <p>School to consider evacuation policy in consultation with WHS staff, Area Director and local Fire Control Centre</p> <p>School staff to keep a general look out for any fires in the vicinity</p> <p>Sports practices and other School activities that normally require travel to a venue outside the School should be cancelled and students will remain on campus</p>

Table 4: Burning embers landing on the school grounds OR fire within 2kms of school requiring more than ten (10) tankers OR a nearby fire appears it may impact the school OR as directed by Lower Hunter District Officer Rural Fire Service OR Alert level is Emergency

Notify	Actions
School Staff Area Director School Community	The school to activate STAY IN PLACE as per Bush Fire Emergency Management Plan Activate schools communication plan Defending the school activities are to be the priority of all property staff and fire wardens All hoses and pumps to be set up Fire fighting equipment to be set up School Principal (or delegate) to contact Lower Hunter Fire Control Centre on 4015 0000 and advise the situation until fire tankers arrive If embers land on the school grounds calls triple zero (000) immediately Stay informed – listen to local ABC radio (Newcastle 1233), monitor the RFS web site www.rfs.nsw.gov.au and look for other sources of information School staff to keep a general look out for any fires in the vicinity



For further information, please contact Operational Officer Leanne Bell on 0428 343 402 or email leanne.bell@rfs.nsw.gov.au