

NEIGHBOUR ALERT BULLETIN November 2022



ABOUT US

Pearl Beach Safety Advisory Group (PBSAG) is a subcommittee of the Pearl Beach Progress Association. It is a small group of local Community volunteers, some with great expertise such as medicos, trainers and life savers. The Pearl Beach Progress Association's Safety Advisory Group has been active in Pearl Beach safety matters and has in recent years:

- Installed 4 defibrillators (AEDs) within Pearl Beach with CPR/AED training/accreditations arranged for over 20 local residents.
- Beach safety warning signage and installed/maintain beach safety equipment following the tragic drowning of a little boy in 2014, and more recently in March 2021 an elderly man drowned.
- Implemented and maintains the Neighbour Alert resident messaging system alerting residents of danger/emergency evacuation situations such as bush fires
- 2021 completed the Community Support Centre at the Memorial Community Hall, and
- Supports the activities of the Pearl Beach Rural Fire Service.

BUSHFIRE DANGER – FIRE SEASON HAS STARTED!

Pearl Beach is in the middle of the Brisbane Water National Park and with most suburban streets containing natural tree cover, with around half the homes on bushfire prone land and the whole village rated "high risk" by the Rural Fire Service.

The Dec 2016 bush fire at Patonga Drive highlighted that Pearl Beach residents were ill prepared, and either didn't know what to do or were totally unaware of the fire threat. As a result, PBSAG implemented **Neighbour Alert**, a reliable local community-based communication system, with volunteer **Street Contacts** collecting neighbours' contact information and phone numbers to provide SMS alerts on nearby bushfires.

NOTE: It is important to clarify, Street Contacts are volunteers and are not fire wardens, fire fighters nor are they expected to provide any other support to people in time of a bushfire emergency. They collect information for neighbour alerts and may be able to coordinate some communications during an emergency, but like everyone else their responsibility in an emergency is their own personal safety

SMS TEXT MESSAGING SYSTEM

PBSAG maintains a Neighbour Alert data base of mobile phone numbers for residents who have provided them to *Street Contacts*. When PBSAG becomes aware of an emergency, the system is used to send bulk SMS messages to mobile phones of residents registered in the Neighbour Alert system data base.

NOTE: PBSAG is a volunteer community organisation, not an emergency service. We are not an official emergency communications channel, though we do have links with RFS and should be aware of most threats reasonably quickly. We can only send SMS's to people who have given us their (current) phone numbers – we can not send "geofenced" alerts like police so if we don't have your details you will not receive our message.

YOUR BUSH FIRE SURVIVAL PLAN

Your Street Contact will, or will have in prior years, provided residents with the **RFS Bush Fire Survival Plan brochure**. PBSAG is working with the RFS to ensure Pearl Beach residents have completed their Bush Fire Survival Plan and that it remains relevant to your personal situation.




NEW RFS BUSHFIRE DANGER RATINGS

RFS has streamlined fire danger ratings – to indicate *how severe a fire is likely to be if one starts*.

 <h3>MODERATE</h3> <p>Plan and prepare.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stay up to date and be ready to act if there is a fire. 	 <h3>HIGH</h3> <p>Be ready to act.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There's a heightened risk. Be alert for fires in your area. Decide what you will do if a fire starts. If a fire starts, your life and property may be at risk. The safest option is to avoid bush fire risk areas.
 <h3>EXTREME</h3> <p>Take action now to protect your life and property.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> These are dangerous fire conditions. Check your bush fire plan and ensure that your property is fire ready. If a fire starts, take immediate action. If you and your property are not prepared to the highest level, go to a safer location well before the fire impacts. Reconsider travel through bush fire risk areas. 	 <h3>CATASTROPHIC</h3> <p>At Catastrophic, for your survival leave bush fire risk areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> These are the most dangerous conditions for a fire. Your life may depend on the decisions you make, even before there is a fire. Stay safe by going to a safer location early in the morning or the night before. Homes cannot withstand fires in these conditions. You may not be able to leave, and help may not be available.

RFS BUSHFIRE ALERT LEVELS

Alert level tells you *what to do once a fire has started* in your area.

 <p>ADVICE</p> <p>A fire has started, but is not immediate danger. Stay up to date in case the situation changes.</p>  <p>WATCH AND ACT</p> <p>Heightened threat level. Conditions are changing and you need to start taking action now to protect you and your family. If your plan is to GO, go now while you can.</p>  <p>EMERGENCY WARNING</p> <p>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>	<p>Publicly available bush fire danger alert notification systems include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> RFS/SES Text Messages sent to all mobile phones connected to the local mobile phone tower. Fires Near Me app – smartphone & tablet NSW RFS website – rfs.nsw.gov.au Bushfire Information – 1 800 679 737 Local radio – ABC 92.5 FM / 702 AM Facebook – facebook.com/nswrfs Twitter – twitter.com/nswrfs
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Property Preparation for the 2022/23 Bush Fire Season

A reminder to everyone to update your PLAN, and PREPARE your property. While it may seem wet and unnecessary right now... remember the wet weather has been perfect for bush & plant growth, and it only takes a few weeks for everything to dry out and all that recent growth to become a major hazard.

GET READY

FOR BUSH FIRE SEASON

PROPERTY PREPARATION FOR THE BUSH FIRE SEASON

Getting ready for the bush fire season could be easier than you think. Even the little things can make a difference during a bush fire. Here are the top five actions that you can do to make your home safer:

- 1 TRIM**
overhanging trees and shrubs.
- 2 MOW**
your lawn and remove all the cut grass.
- 3 REMOVE**
material that can burn around your home
(e.g. door mats, wood piles, mulch, leaves, paint, outdoor furniture).
- 4 CLEAR**
and remove all the debris and leaves from the gutters
surrounding your home.
- 5 PREPARE**
a hose or hoses that can stretch all around the house.

PREPARE. ACT. SURVIVE. TO FIND OUT MORE GO TO [RFS.NSW.GOV.AU](https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au)



A critical message to all Pearl Beach residents and property owners.
Refer to <https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/plan-and-prepare/prepare-your-property> for more information.

INFORMATIVE LINKS

<https://pearlbeachprogress.org.au/wp-content/uploads/20200903-Bushfire-Awareness-Preparing-your-Property.pdf>

<https://pearlbeachprogress.org.au/wp-content/uploads/20200903-Bush-Fire-Behaviour.pdf>

Police, Ambulance, Fire Brigade, RFS
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Major Bushfire Information

1800 679 737

NSW RFS Website

[rfs.nsw.gov.au](https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au)

Free Smartphone App

Fires Near Me

Local Radio

ABC 92.5FM / 702 AM

Social Media

facebook.com/nswrfs - twitter.com/nswrfs

SES

132 500

Central Coast Council

4325 8222

COMMUNITY SUPPORT CENTRE (CSC)

Our community Memorial Hall has been upgraded with funding from the Australian Government to improve safety and resilience to bushfires. Our strong advice is to GO and GO EARLY – but if you're trapped as a fire approaches, we now have somewhere to shelter that offers more protection than the beach.

- **Bushfire protection sprinkler system** with:
 - 20 sprinklers protecting the hall roof and another 30 for walls
 - Two rainwater tanks totalling 18,000L in the rear yard to supply water for sprinklers
 - Electric fire sprinkler pump and spearpoint pump* for backup water to top up tanks in a fire
 - * Spearpoint install delayed due to WaterNSW Licence issues and costs. Sprinklers still work.
- **Solar power emergency backup system** with:
 - 7.4 kW solar panels (approximately doubling the size of the existing array on the North roof)
 - 24 kWh battery storage (2 days normal supply for the hall, 10 hours supply for fire pumps)
 - 10 kVA generator for backup after batteries run low
- A substantially more resilient "last resort" place for residents to shelter if unable to evacuate from a major fire or other major events such as a storm or power outage.
 - We have advised the Central Coast Bushfire Management Committee, seeking their assessment for CSC to be officially recognised as a bushfire *Neighbourhood Safer Place* for Pearl Beach.
 - Operating procedures and manual are being finalised, and PBSAG & other community volunteers* are being trained to operate and supervise the CSC during a fire or storm. Training will include operation of the sprinklers and backup power systems, as well as assisting/directing people to the CSC in events of bushfire and/or storms and loss of power in the village.



* We are training our CSC operators soon and need some extra volunteers. We'd like at least a dozen operators, as on the day there's a fire some will be away, others will GO, so we need to ensure that of the people left and forced to shelter, some know how to operate the fire sprinklers etc. It's not hard we promise. To enquire or express interest please contact Paul Toohey at email p.toohey48@gmail.com

Safety Advisory Group

November 2022

Sub-Committee of Pearl Beach Progress Association

Committee Members:

Paul Toohey (Convenor)
John Allan
Peter Little
Jan Steinbeck
Nigel Tisdale (PBPA Exec Rep)
Helen Thurlow
Russell Grove
Ben Kearney



Special Advisors:

Richard Stewart
RFS – Lindsay Boyd
SES – Wendy Whitmore