



Cumberland Zone – NSW Rural Fire Service

COMMUNITY EDUCATION STRATEGY

2007-2008

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1.0 Background

The development of a Community Education Strategy is a requirement of Service Standard 4.3.1 to identify proposed educational strategies, key target groups and resources to support these strategies.

The Community Education Strategy is for a financial year and is to be submitted to the Regional Office by 30 March of each year.

1.1 Cumberland Zone Area

The Cumberland Zone incorporates the three local government areas of Blacktown, Fairfield and Penrith, covering an area of 653.9 square kilometres. The Zone is located in western Sydney midway between the Blue Mountains and Parramatta, approximately 35 kilometres from Sydney. The Zone is bordered by Blue Mountains in the west, Hawkesbury in the northwest, Baulkham Hills in the north, Holroyd to the east and Liverpool to the south.

The Zone is made up of densely populated areas around the city centres and along the main transport routes of the Great Western Highway and railway lines. To the south of the Highway there are rural properties with grazing, dairy and poultry as the major land uses and large areas of grasslands. The northern areas are mainly populated cities with rural and rural-residential regions along the northern border of Blacktown and northern areas of Penrith. These rural areas consist mostly of various hobby farms and market gardens.

1.2 Areas of concern

Areas of concern have been identified as those areas with the potential to experience bush or grass fires with associated risks to the local residents and communities. Those areas within the Cumberland Zone are identified as follows;

- Bushland areas around Londonderry and Castlereagh
- Bushland areas in Marsden Park and Vineyard
- Castlereagh Nature Reserve
- Aboriginal land in Berkshire Park and Llandilo
- Yellowmunde Nature Reserve
- Mulgoa Nature reserve
- The Rock – Blue Mountains National Park
- Rural areas of Wallacia, Mulgoa, Luddenham, Erskine Park, Horsley Park, Mt Vernon
- Air Services Australia land in Shanes Park

2.0 Fire Awareness & Education Strategies

Strategies have been established as a guideline for the community education / awareness activities for the Cumberland Zone. These strategies have considered the nature of the area including the type of fire and potential impacts, with strategies to provide the community with the information to enable them to undertake the necessary actions prior, during and after a bush fire. The following is a list of strategies for the Cumberland Zone with each strategy being detailed further below.

- General Fire Awareness (summer & winter fires)
- Bush Fire Preparedness (urban/bush interface)
- Bush/Grass Fire Preparedness (rural areas)
- Children Bush Fire Awareness
- Operational Awareness
- Training of Volunteers

2.1 Strategy 1: General Fire Awareness (Summer & Winter Fires)

Aim: is to raise the awareness amongst the community on how they may prepare and protect themselves and their assets in the event of a fire and the regulations relating to the use of fire.

Strategy:

- 2.1.1 Provide static displays at different events within the Cumberland Zone to provide the relevant information to the public.
- 2.1.2 Utilise media to promote fire awareness for both summer and winter fire scenarios.
- 2.1.3 Encourage all brigades to participate in the annual RFS Open Day and provide publicity for the Open Day and resources.
- 2.1.4 Develop & Implement Community Smoke Alarm Program
- 2.1.5 Promote Winter Fire Safety awareness throughout the community

Annual Events with NSWRFs attendance

Date	Event
25 January	Australia Day at Penrith Lakes
February	Luddenham Show
March	Penrith Festival
April	Blacktown Environment Day

May	Mt Druitt Hospital Fete
July	Berkshire Park Ag & Ute Show
August	Penrith Show
August	Penrith Council Open Day
September	Penrith Home Show
October	RFS Open Day
November	Festival of Music (Mulgoa)
December	Horsley Park Christmas Carols

2.2 Strategy 2: Bush Fire Preparedness (urban/bush interface)

Aim: To increase the public's awareness and preparedness to the potential sources and threats of both bush and house fires and to minimise the impact of any outbreak on personal safety or loss of assets through better community education.

Strategies:

- 2.2.1 Arrange street meetings in those areas known to be of concern to encourage fire preparation prior to the Bush Fire Season.
- 2.2.2 Provide static displays at different events within the Cumberland Zone to provide the relevant information to the public.
- 2.2.3 Approach community groups such as Lions, Rotary, Scouts etc to arrange presentations of fire awareness.

Actions	2006-07	2007-08 Proposed
No. of Street Meetings	0	2

2.3 Strategy 3: Bush/Grass Fire Preparedness (rural areas)

Aim: To increase land managers awareness of fires and personal safety so that they may have properties better prepared and managed to prevent the start and spread of fires.

Strategies:

- 2.3.1 Arrange street meetings in those areas known to be of concern to encourage fire preparation prior to the Bush Fire Season.
- 2.3.2 Provide static displays at different events within the Cumberland Zone to provide the relevant information to the public.

- 2.3.3 Approach community groups such as Lions, Rotary, Scouts etc to arrange presentations of fire awareness.
- 2.3.4 Develop a property management plan for rural properties to utilise to prepare their properties to reduce the spread and impact of a grass fire.
- 2.3.5 promote the distribution of property management plans within the rural areas of the Cumberland Zone

Actions	2006-07	2007-08 Proposed
No. of Street Meetings	0	2
No. of Registered Property Plans	0	2

2.4 Strategy 4: Children Bush Fire Awareness

Aim: To bring fire awareness to youths through schools and other events in order to reduce the number of fires and increase their safety in the event of fires.

Strategies:

- 2.4.1 Develop a calendar of attendance to schools and contacts for schools;
- 2.4.2 Promote Fire Safety programs within schools
- 2.4.3 Attend local schools to deliver the school firewise program for kids;
- 2.4.4 To conduct kids fireguard sessions in conjunction with other Community Education events;
- 2.4.5 Plan & conduct the NSWRFs 10 Week School Cadet Program.

Actions	2006-07	2007-08 Proposed
No. of Child Care Facilities visits	?	5
No. of Primary School visits	?	5
No. of School Cadet Programs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nepean High School 	1	1

2.5 Strategy 5: Operational Awareness

Aim: To provide the resources for the public to better prepare for bush and grass fires and to support operational aspects when combating fires.

Strategies:

- 2.5.1 Encourage volunteers to be trained in the role of Community Liaison Officers.
- 2.5.2 Promote the Static Water Supply program within the Zone
- 2.5.3 Promote and assist special fire protection developments in developing Bush Fire Evacuation / Relocation Plans

Actions	2006-07	2007-08 Proposed
No. of CLO's trained	0	2
No. of Registered SWS	0	5
No. of Registered BFEP	0	5

2.6 Strategy 6: Volunteer Training

Aim: To increase volunteers knowledge and understanding of community education in fire awareness and safety to enable them to actively participate in community education strategies within the Zone.

Strategies:

- 2.6.1 Promote and encourage volunteers in participating in Community Safety training courses
- 2.6.2 Encourage volunteers to participate in community education activities
- 2.6.3 Plan and conduct available community Safety training packages and assist volunteers to attend training in other locations

Training Programs	Current	2007-08 Proposed
No. of Community Safety Assistants trained	0*	20
No. of Community Safety Facilitators trained	0	10
No. of Community Safety Coordinators trained	0	5

* 6 volunteers initiated CSA training. Some members to complete workshop and attend Community Education events/programs.

3.0 Reporting

Reporting of community awareness / education activities provides a record of those activities with regards to what the activity was, where it was held, how many attended and who participated in assisting and presenting at those activities.

The NSWRFSS have developed BRIMS (Bushfire Risk Information Management System) which is a database of a variety of community safety roles, including Community Education. To assist in the recording of the different community education activities, forms for each of the different types have been developed. These forms are to be completed and returned to the Community Safety Officer who will be responsible for entering the records into BRIMS.

4.0 Resources

Community Education will utilise a range of resources to promote fire awareness such as media, RFS community educators, NSWRFSS handouts, teaching aids and visual displays.

4.1 Publications

Community Education will be using a range of information in the form of different guides and publications and Fact Sheets to promote fire awareness, preparedness and safety.

The RFS provides many publications such as bushfire wise brochures, stickers, bookmarks, etc. Consultation with NSWRFSS HQ & other Districts with development of alternate promotional products such as;

- Stickers for children
- Swap cards
- Wrist bands

Consultation with NSWRFSS HQ & other Districts with development of improved educational material to support the community educational strategies proposed. Some proposed education material to be developed;

- Smoke Alarm brochure
- Property Preparedness Booklet & Checklist
- Bushfire Evacuation Relocation Plan (guidelines & template)

4.2 Visual Displays:

The Zone has a purpose built Community Education Trailer with video, tv, display boards, and canopy

A mini fire truck has been built by a rural fire brigade to be utilised by all brigades at a range of events as an attraction for children.