



# CLEMATIS RURAL FIRE BRIGADE

PO Box 350, Emerald 3782

Ph : 03 59684555

Fax: 03 59684327

## SHOULD I STAY OR GO

The decision on whether to stay with your home or evacuate to another location, should be made long before a bushfire reaches your area.

### Fact

**Whether you choose to stay or go it is very important that you make your decision EARLY**

### How do I make the decision to stay or go?

There are a number of factors you should take into account when making the decision to stay and defend your home, or to evacuate early.

**Stay and defend your home only** if you are well prepared.

**Leave the area early** in the day and well ahead of the advancing fire front.

### Stay

We recommend that you only consider staying to defend your home if you are:

- **Well prepared.** This means protective clothing such as long-sleeved shirts and pants of natural fibres; sturdy shoes, goggles, gloves, a hat and face mask.
- **Fit and healthy.** Defending your home from bushfires is physically demanding, so only consider staying with your home if your fitness level and health status is suitable.
- **Able to remain calm under stress and pressure.** Be prepared for the stress and confusion generated by the fire. It will be smoky, noisy and hot. You need to be fit, well and able to stay calm under pressure.

### Go

Then we recommend that you make the decision to evacuate early if you are:

- Unwell
- Elderly
- Caring for children or other dependents
- Unsure about staying

### How Early Should I leave?

If you are planning on going then you should leave early, each and every day that either a total fire ban day has been declared or a day of extreme fire danger then you should leave in the morning.

Ideally, this decision should be made when you are preparing your home and property at the start of the bushfire season.

## **If GOING**

**If you make the decision to evacuate your home, there are a number of points to consider. If going, consider the following**

### **WHO in the household should go?**

We recommend that the elderly, young children and the infirm should go

### **WHEN should they go?**

Early in the day and well ahead of fire entering the area

### **WHERE should they go?**

Arrange a meeting place a safe distance from the fire - it might be with a friend, relative, or at an official refuge

### **WHAT should they take?**

Have documents, valuables, medications and pets packed and ready to go

## **If STAYING**

**If you have decided to stay and defend your home then there are a several things you should do to prepare when a bushfire approaches. If staying with your home consider these points**

- Turn off gas and power
- Block downpipes and fill gutters with water
- Hose down external walls, gardens etc before the fire arrives
- Bring hoses/fittings and other fire suppression tools inside, so they can be used later
- Fill all sinks, baths etc with water to use on spot fires in case the mains water supply or domestic electric water pumps fail
- Close all doors and windows and block gaps with damp towels
- Move flammable curtains and furniture away from windows
- Shelter in a part of the house most distant from the approaching fire front until fire has passed then actively extinguish spot fires
- Keep a torch and portable AM/FM radio at hand to monitor weather conditions in case the power fails
- Wear long sleeves and long pants made from natural fibres and sturdy footwear
- Have eye and breathing protection available for everyone
- Once the fire front has passed, go outside to check for spot fires and ember attack

### **Bushfire Evacuation/Relocation Safety Tips**

- Stay and defend your home if you are well prepared or leave the area early in the day and well ahead of advancing fire front
- Have an evacuation plan ready - make sure everyone in the household is familiar with the plan and what is expected from them
- Have a portable AM/FM radio with spare batteries handy and listen to weather forecasts and emergency messages
- Know where you, your partner and children will be on extreme fire danger days
- Have relevant phone numbers handy (school, work, friends, emergency services, bushfire Information hotline)