

A note to you all: December 2019

Fires

Most of us would have had some previous experience of the tragedy of fire. I remember clearly the appalling 1983 Ash Wednesday fires and was, as were so many Canberrans, horrified with the 2003 fires here in the national capital.

The Forest Fire Management Victoria website provides a salutary reminder as to the devastation fire has caused over the last 200 or so years. This website also acknowledges a much deeper past:

Fire has been present on the Australian continent for millions of years and has been significant in shaping much of the landscape. Many fires were started by lightning.

Aboriginal people used fire for many thousands of years to 'care for country'. The fires were a tool that encouraged the growth and extent of grasslands to enhance hunting, reduced levels of fuel, and kept vegetation from becoming dense and hard to walk through. www.ffm.vic.gov.au/history-and-incidents/past-bushfires

The experts have been warning us for years we are now in a changing landscape. Retired fire chiefs stated very clearly to those who would listen these wide-spread catastrophic fires were predicted. What can we do as individuals, as residents, as communities?

One can only be in awe with the extraordinary courage and dedication of the volunteer fireies, surely over and beyond the call of duty. Where would we be without them? If you wish to help there a couple of possibilities:

You may like to consider joining the ACT Fire and Rescue: Community Fire Units

- esa.act.gov.au/sites/default/files/wp-content/uploads/CFU-Information-Brochure.pdf

Many Canberrans also own properties in NSW so you may like to donate to your local Rural Fire Service brigade.

- www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/volunteer/support-your-local-brigade

The following websites provide invaluable advice:

ACT News and alerts

- esa.act.gov.au/news-alerts

Fires near me

- www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/fire-information/fires-near-me

ABC Emergency

- www.facebook.com/ABCemergency/
- www.abc.net.au/news/emergency/

Bush fire survival plan: homes

- www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0017/2933/BushFireSurvivalPlan.pdf

Hazard reductions

- www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/fire-information/hazard-reductions

Coping with the smoke

Please note the health warnings about the hazardous smoke. The only mask that actually reduces the risk is a correctly fitting P2 mask. Please see the ABC website for further information as to what actually works:

- www.abc.net.au/news/health/2019-12-03/face-masks-for-bushfire-smoke-haze-pollution/11760618

This website strongly advises staying indoors with doors and windows closed in days of high levels of pollution.

Biodiversity

The so often overlooked disaster is the utterly tragic loss of our biodiversity. The heartbreaking scenes of burnt koalas epitomises this loss. Our amazing flora, fauna and the multitudinous soil macro and microorganisms so essential in the intricate and complex web of life are all damaged by the intensity of these fires.

You may like to consider donating to organisations such as:

Australian Conservation Foundation

- www.acf.org.au

Australian Wildlife Conservancy

- www.australianwildlife.org/where-we-work/

Reid house fire

We would all like to thank the ACT Fire and Rescue for their rapid response to a house fire in Reid. They are to be congratulated for containing the fire and preventing it from spreading to neighbouring properties. It is, however, very sad for the young family who lost so many treasured possessions as the fire gutted most of the house.

A big thank you to those who made quick donations to express our concern and support. If you haven't already and would like to add some Christmas cheer to the family and their four young children you can do so by a bank deposit as follows:

- A/C Name - Reid Residents Association Inc
- Bank - Beyond Bank
- BSB - 325 185
- A/C - 03416816

If you have any questions please contact us at info@reid.northcanberra.org.au

Thieves

The usual holiday warnings need to be restated. There are thieves about in all suburbs and Reid is no exception. Please note the usual cautions: police.act.gov.au/safety-and-security/property-crime-prevention

Conviviality

Please check on your neighbours. These are times to really look out for each other.

Yesterday we just passed the summer solstice so it's time for those short day-length plants to start to 'star'. This article might remind & amuse:

www.abc.net.au/gardening/factsheets/bump-in-the-night/9777676

Wishing you all good cheer, a restorative, peaceful and safe Christmas and here's to an intelligent, science-based approach to 2020!

Marianne