THE KOORALBYN INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL

Bushfire Safety Policy

Purpose of the Policy

The Kooralbyn International School is committed to the safety and well-being of our students, staff, and visitors. Given our location and the potential risk of bushfires, we have developed this Bushfire Safety Policy in accordance with the guidelines provided by the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) Bushfire Safety Guide (see attached). This policy aims to establish procedures and protocols to prevent, prepare for, and respond to bushfire emergencies.

Policy

1. Risk Assessment:

a. Conduct regular risk assessments to identify and evaluate potential bushfire hazards on and around the school premises.

b. Collaborate with local authorities and emergency services to stay informed about the bushfire risk level in the region.

2. Emergency Contacts: Maintain an up-to-date list of emergency contacts, including local fire authorities, parents/guardians, and relevant emergency services.

3. Communication Plan:

a. Establish a communication system to ensure timely notification of all stakeholders in the event of a bushfire threat (Facebook page, email, sms).

b. Designate responsible individuals to communicate with emergency services and coordinate evacuation efforts.

4. Evacuation Procedures:

a. Develop and regularly review clear and well-marked evacuation routes and assembly points (current building and room LAP plans).

b. Conduct regular evacuation drills to ensure students and staff are familiar with the procedures.

c. Assign responsibilities to staff members for guiding and assisting students during evacuations.

5. Shelter-in-Place Protocols:

a. Identify safe areas within the school buildings for sheltering in case evacuation is not immediately possible (A Block).

b. Equip designated shelter areas with emergency supplies, such as first aid kits, water, and communication devices (A Block).

6. Training and Education:

Provide regular training to staff and students on bushfire safety procedures and evacuation protocols.

7. Property Preparation:

a. Implement vegetation management strategies to reduce fuel loads on school grounds.

b. Regularly maintain and inspect firefighting equipment, such as hoses and fire extinguishers (Regular inspection conducted by registered organisation).

8. Monitoring and Early Warning Systems:

a. Install and maintain a reliable early warning system to alert the school community of approaching bushfires.

b. Monitor weather conditions and fire danger ratings to anticipate potential threats.

9. Review and Update: Regularly review and update the Bushfire Safety Policy in collaboration with local emergency services, taking into consideration any changes in the school's infrastructure, personnel, or the local environment.

10. Compliance with QFES Guidelines: Ensure strict compliance with the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services Bushfire Safety Guide (see attached), incorporating its recommendations into our school's policies and procedures.

11. Reporting Incidents: Immediately report any potential fire hazards, smoke sightings, or suspicious activities to the local fire authorities and follow their instructions.

By adhering to this Bushfire Safety Policy, The Kooralbyn International School aims to create a safer environment for everyone on our premises. We are committed to proactive measures and continuous improvement to mitigate the risks associated with bushfires.

Date of Policy

Released March 2022

Last Reviewed- January 2023

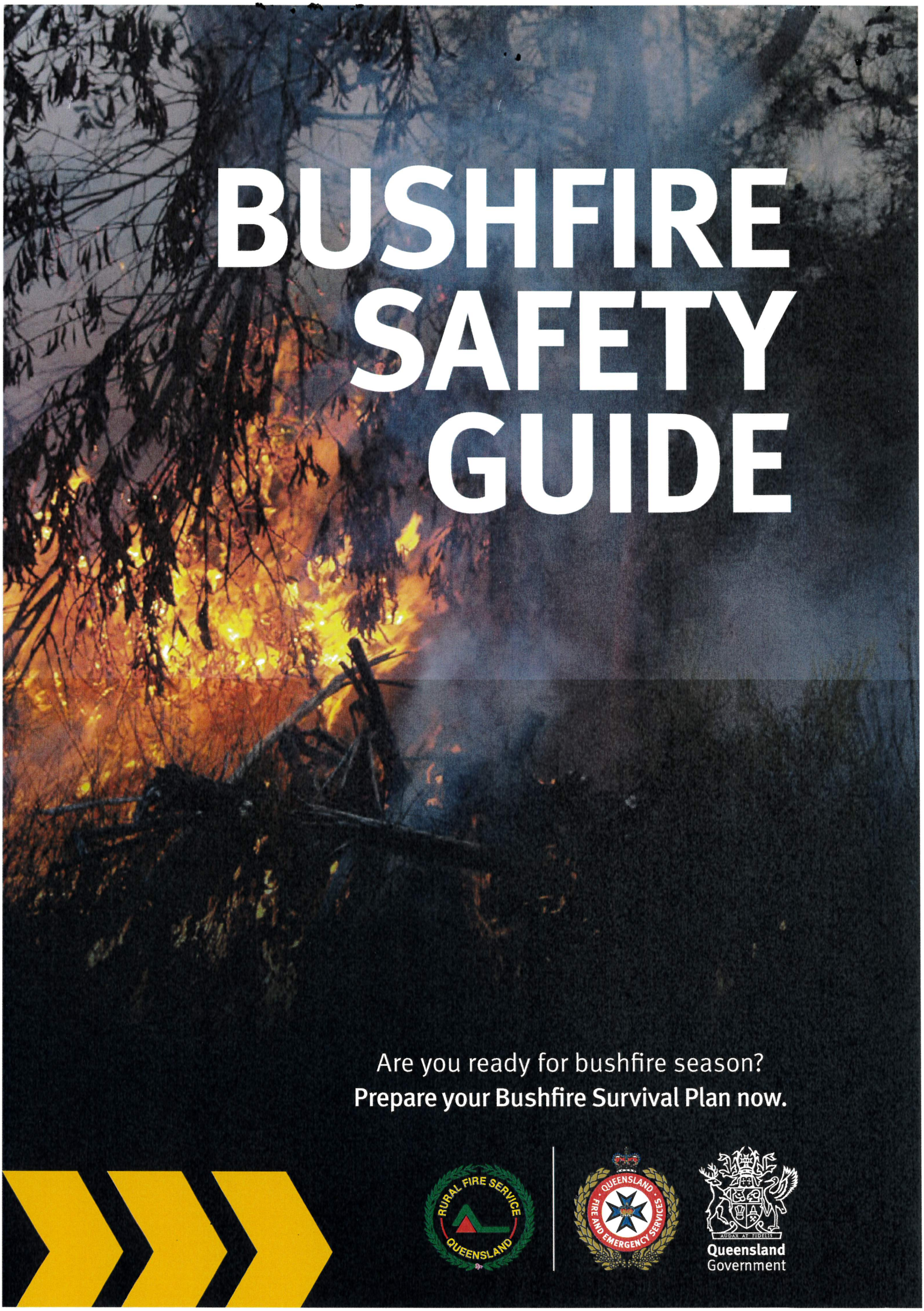
Approved by

Principal

Signature: Date:

Related Policies and Documents

Emergency Management Plan



BUSHFIRE SAFETY GUIDE

Are you ready for bushfire season?

Prepare your Bushfire Survival Plan now.

RURAL FIRE SERVICE QUEENSLAND

QUEENSLAND FIRE AND EMERGENCY SERVICES

AUDAX AT FIDELIS

Queensland Government



Bushfires can affect you no matter where you live in Queensland.

Bushfires move fast, can be highly destructive and pose a serious threat to life, property, and the environment.

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services (QFES) are committed to protecting lives and properties, however in a state as big as Queensland, a fire crew may not be available to assist every home.

It's important you have a plan in place and know exactly what you can do to protect yourself, your family, and your property.

During a bushfire, your safety depends on your preparations and the decisions you make.

The first step is to understand your level of risk to help you make informed decisions that are right for you and your family.

When is bushfire season?

Fire season in Queensland often begins in July and runs through until October, but can extend through to February. However, bushfires in Queensland can occur at any time.

These times can vary each year depending on the condition of local bushland, long-term climate conditions, and short-term weather events. The impacts of climate change are creating extended fire seasons that include higher temperatures with more frequent hot days, and increased fire danger across the state.

KNOW YOUR RISK

Is your property at risk?

All Queenslanders need to be prepared for bushfire. You don't have to live in the bush to be threatened by bushfires, just close enough to be affected by burning material, embers, and smoke.

If you answer yes to any of the questions below you are at a heightened risk of bushfire.

- Do you live within a few kilometres of bushland?
- Does your local area have a history of bushfire?
- Do you have trees and shrubs within 20 metres of your home?
- Do you live along the coast near scrub?
- Do you live on a farm or near paddocks?

Visit the QFES website at **www.qfes.qld.gov.au** and use the post code checker to see the bushfire potential in your neighbourhood.

It's not just fire.

Bushfires can lead to loss of life and cause serious damage to property and infrastructure, but the fire itself is only one part of the danger.

- Fire embers (small pieces of burning bark, leaves and twigs) can be caught in the wind and travel many kilometres from where the bushfire is burning and cause spot fires to start.
- The radiant heat from a large bushfire can be felt more than 100 metres away and can melt or crack objects such as glass windows, allowing embers into buildings and vehicles.
- Radiant heat can also be deadly to people and animals, causing dehydration and even heatstroke.
- Toxic fumes and heavy smoke from bushfires can make seeing and breathing difficult.



Is your home at risk?

Use this risk factors checklist to assess the vulnerability to your home in the event of a bushfire. Consider what changes you could make to your home to reduce your risk. The more boxes you tick, the more prepared your home may be.

Does your home have:

- ☐ Non-combustible exterior walls.
- ☐ Sealed roof ridge capping.
- ☐ Enclosed eaves.
- ☐ An enclosed underfloor.
- ☐ Metal screened vents.
- ☐ Non-combustible window trimmings.
- ☐ Non-combustible deck or verandah.

If firefighters need to access your property, does it have:

- ☐ Access route clear of overhanging trees.
- ☐ Access route clear of overhead powerlines.
- ☐ Unrestricted driveway access (gates can be opened without restriction).
- ☐ Room for large vehicles to reverse in (Approximately four metres wide).
- ☐ Turning or passing areas for large vehicles.
- ☐ Heavy vehicle access on cattle grids and bridges.
- ☐ Two-wheel drive vehicle access.
- ☐ An alternative way out for vehicles.

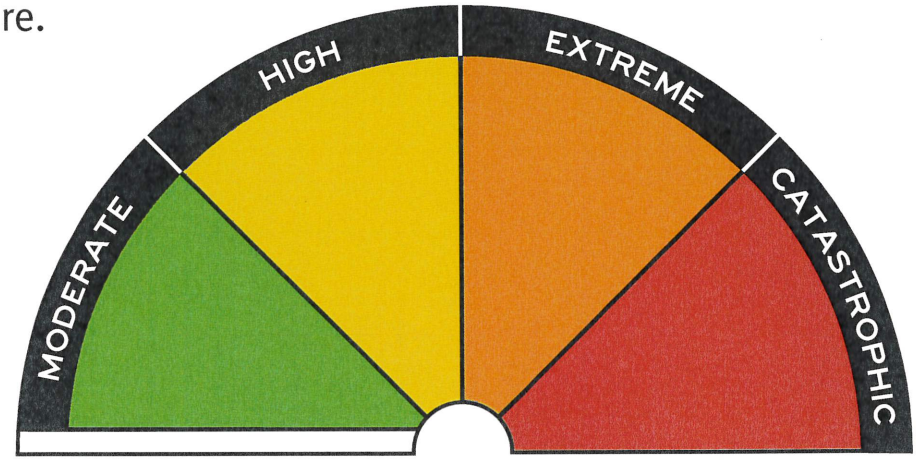
Do you have accessible water supply:

- ☐ Reticulated water supply.
- ☐ Tank supply suitable for firefighter access - 50mm male camlock fitting with shut-off valve.
- ☐ Accessible open water supply such as a dam or pool.
- ☐ Firefighting pump and hose connected to a water supply.

Know your Fire Danger Ratings.

A Fire Danger Rating (FDR) describes the potential level of danger should a bushfire start. They are important because they provide you with information so you can take action to protect yourself, your family, and your home from the potentially dangerous impacts of bushfire.

They do not indicate the chance of a fire occurring, although this is a common misconception. Ratings are calculated using a combination of weather forecasting and information about vegetation that could fuel a fire.



Find your local FDR forecast by visiting the QFES website at **www.qfes.qld.gov.au.**

Moderate — PLAN AND PREPARE

Plan and prepare.
Most fire can be controlled.

High — BE READY TO ACT

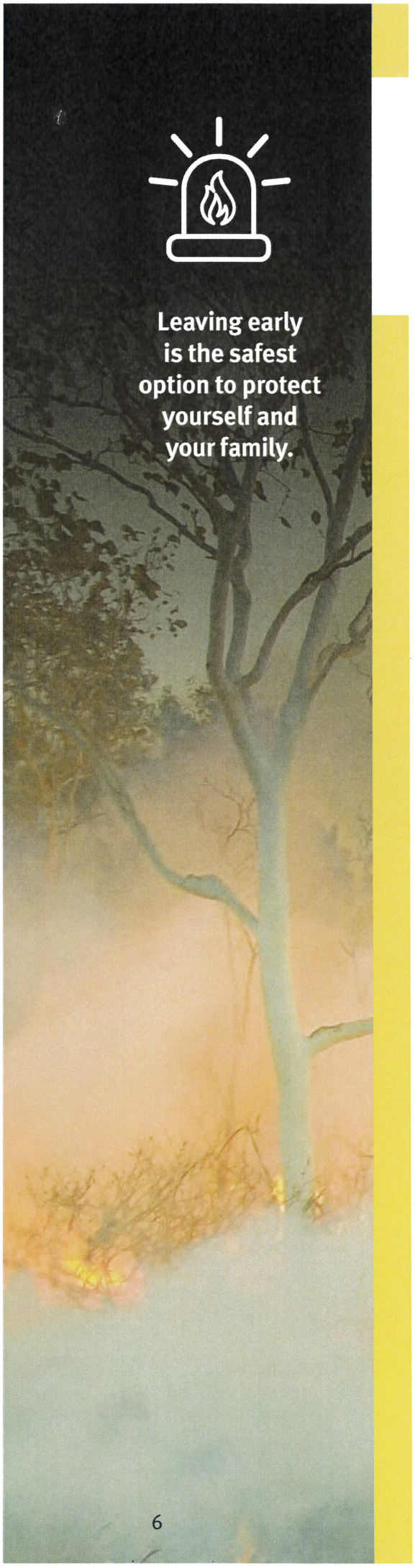
Be ready to act.
Fires can be dangerous.

Extreme — TAKE ACTION NOW

Take action now to protect your life and property.
Fires will spread quickly and be extremely dangerous.

Catastrophic — LEAVE BUSHFIRE RISK AREA

For your survival, leave bushfire risk areas.
If a fire starts and takes hold, lives are likely to be lost.



WILL YOU LEAVE EARLY?

One of the most important things to do before bushfire season is to decide what you will do if a bushfire threatens your home or property.

Leave early? Or stay and defend?

Discuss with your family if you are capable and prepared to stay and defend your home or if leaving is the best choice for your family.

You need to consider:

- **Your health.**
  Fire conditions may aggravate conditions, such as breathing conditions that may make it difficult to defend your property for an extended period of time.
- **Your physical abilities.**
  You may need to defend your home for several hours in extreme heat and smoke which may require intense physical activity.
- **Your mobility.**
  You will need to move around your property with ease, potentially in dark, windy, and noisy conditions.
- **Your mental health.**
  The impact of bushfire can be traumatic and you will need to be mentally prepared.
- **Your ability** to make critical and informed decisions under stressful conditions.

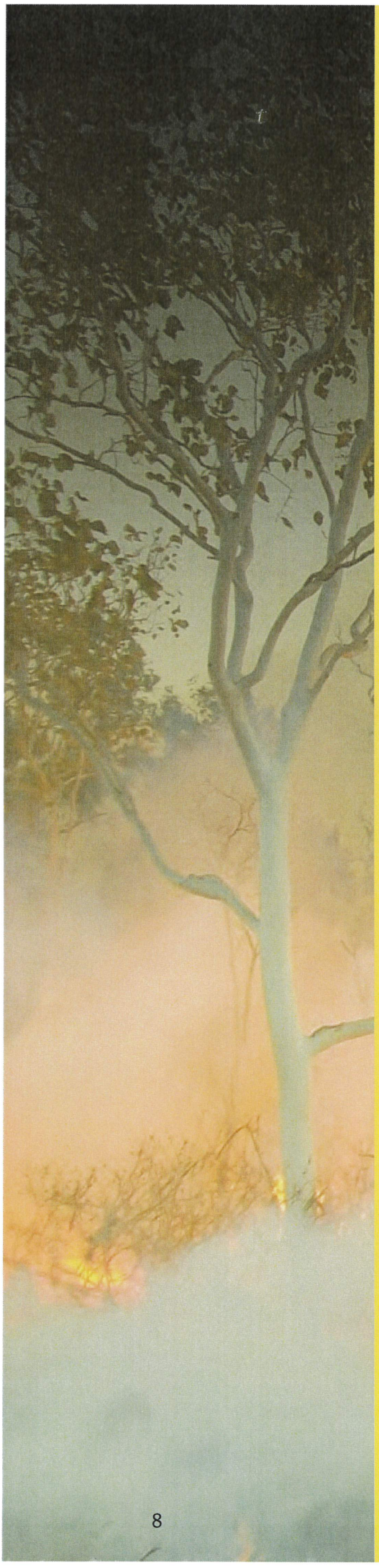
Your decisions.

You have decided to leave early. You need to prepare for the season ahead and make your Bushfire Survival Plan with your family. The decisions you make now will help you be prepared in the event your home and family are impacted by bushfire.

- What will be your trigger to leave? This could be a Fire Danger Rating. Don't rely on an official warning to leave. Bushfires can start quickly and threaten lives and homes within minutes.
- Do you or your family members have any disabilities or medical conditions that you need to take into consideration?
- Will you leave early that morning or the night before?
- Where will you go? Can you stay with family and friends or at a hotel in a safe location?
- Who will you tell? You should let your family, friends, and neighbours know where you have relocated to in case you need to be contacted.
- What route will you take and what is your back up route if a fire is already in the area?
- What will you take with you?
- What are you going to do with your pets or livestock?
- Who else do you need to talk to about where you are going?
- How will you stay informed about warnings and updates?
- What do you need to do to prepare your home before you leave?
- What will you do if there is a fire in the area and you cannot leave? Make sure you have a contingency plan.



If you plan to leave early, then you must leave your home well before a bushfire threatens and travelling by road becomes hazardous.



YOUR BUSHFIRE EVACUATION KIT.

You must prepare a Bushfire Evacuation Kit to ensure you and your family have important items and equipment ready to relocate until you can return to your home.

Include items such as:



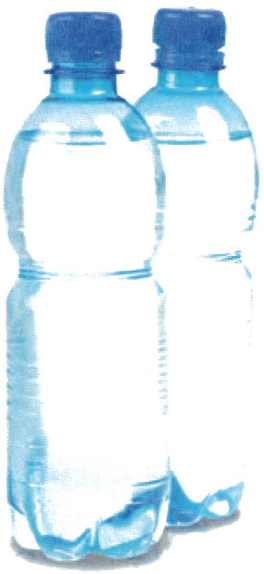
Jeans or long pants (natural fibres)



Hat



Long sleeve shirt (natural fibres)



Drinking water



Medication and prescriptions



Boots

Radio
(battery operated)





Safety glasses



Batteries



Important documents
(e.g. insurance papers)



Wallets and
purses

Mobile phone and charger







Passports and
birth certificates



Pet supplies



Family photos and
valuables



Torch
(battery operated)

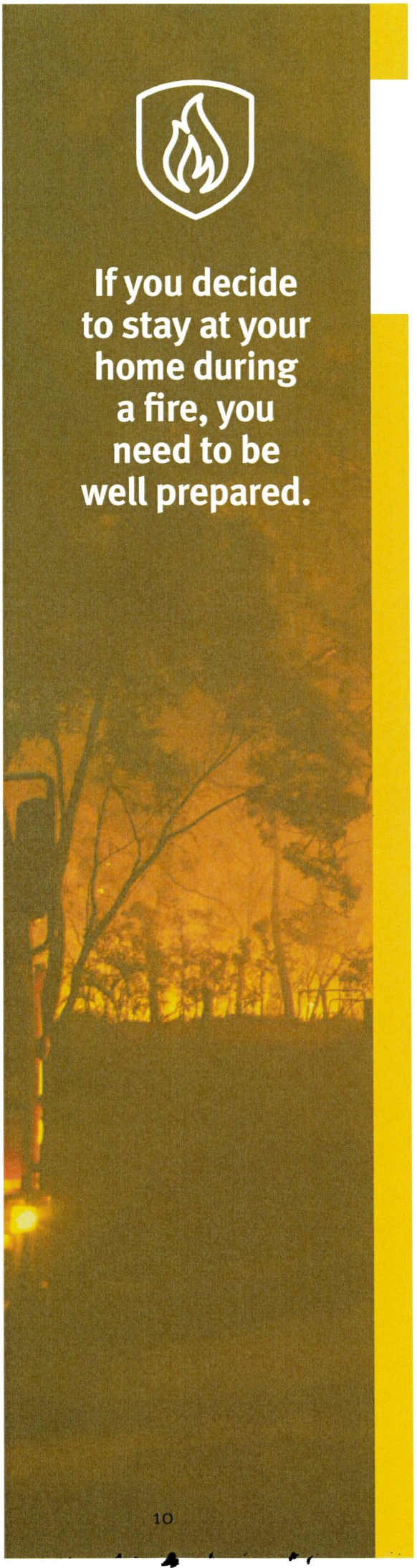


Blankets
(natural fibres)



Children's toys

LEAVE EARLY



If you decide to stay at your home during a fire, you need to be well prepared.

WILL YOU STAY?

Defending your home through a bushfire is a demanding task. You need to be mentally and physically ready and you need to have a plan.

What to expect.

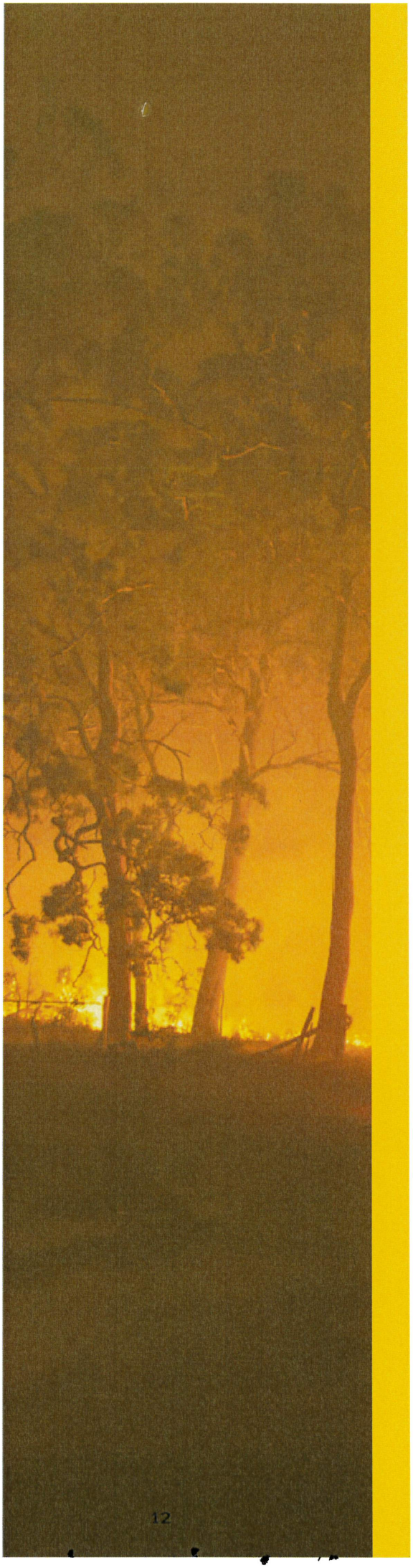
A bushfire is a terrifying and stressful experience. Understanding what to expect and planning what you will do will help you cope.

- It will be hot and dark. The sky may turn orange.
- Strong gusty winds and intense heat will make you tired quickly.
- Thick, heavy smoke will sting your eyes.
- Smoke will make it hard to breathe easily.
- Strong winds will push you around.
- The roaring sound of the wind and fire approaching will make it hard to hear.
- Embers will rain down causing spot fires all around you.
- Power, water and internet may be cut off.
- You may be isolated.
- The fire could impact you very fast, so you need to remain calm and stay focused.
- You may hear explosions nearby.
- While the fire front may pass quite quickly, it could be hours before the danger is over and you can rest.

Your decisions.

You need to discuss your options with your family and prepare your Bushfire Survival Plan so that your whole household knows their roles. Some things that you need to consider are:

- How will you stay informed about warnings and updates?
- Is your property able to withstand the impact of a bushfire? What can you do to better prepare you home?
- Do you have any experience with or knowledge of defending a property during a bushfire?
- Do you have the supplies you need to defend your home, and know how to use them?
- Do you have an independent water supply or will you rely on water mains?
- How many people will be defending the property in the event of a bushfire? It is unsafe to defend a property on your own - if you are injured you may not be able to seek medical assistance and there may be too many locations that need attention for just one person.
- Do you or your family members have any disabilities or medical conditions that you need to take into consideration?
- Will someone else be responsible for looking after others (young, elderly, or disabled)? If you are defending the property, it is preferable that someone else is available to provide supervision or assistance to dependents.
- Is there anyone outside your neighbourhood that you need to help or check up on?
- What are you going to do with your pets or livestock? Will you have someone dedicated to looking after your animals so that you can focus on defending your property?
- What will you do if it's too dangerous to stay? Where will you go? Do you have any family or friends you can stay with? What will you take? Make sure you have a contingency plan.



If you choose or are forced to stay at your property it is essential you are prepared for the oncoming bushfire.

Before the fire front arrives:

- [ ] Ensure vehicles have sufficient fuel and move them to a safe location.
- [ ] Relocate garden furniture, door mats and other outdoor items indoors.
- [ ] Block downpipes at the top and fill gutters with water if possible.
- [ ] Wet down the sides of buildings, decks and plants close to your home in the likely path of the bushfire.
- [ ] Move animals and livestock to a well-grazed or ploughed area.
- [ ] Turn on garden sprinklers for 30 minutes to soak the ground.
- [ ] Close windows, doors, and vents. Shut blinds.
- [ ] Take down curtains and move furniture away from windows.
- [ ] Seal gaps under doors and windows with wet towels.
- [ ] Fill containers with water, e.g. sinks, bathtub, buckets, bins.
- [ ] Bring pets inside, contain them in one room and provide them with plenty of water.
- [ ] Tune in to warnings to monitor local radio, websites or social media for updates.
- [ ] Put on protective clothing.
- [ ] Drink lots of water.
- [ ] Notify friends and family of your intent to stay.

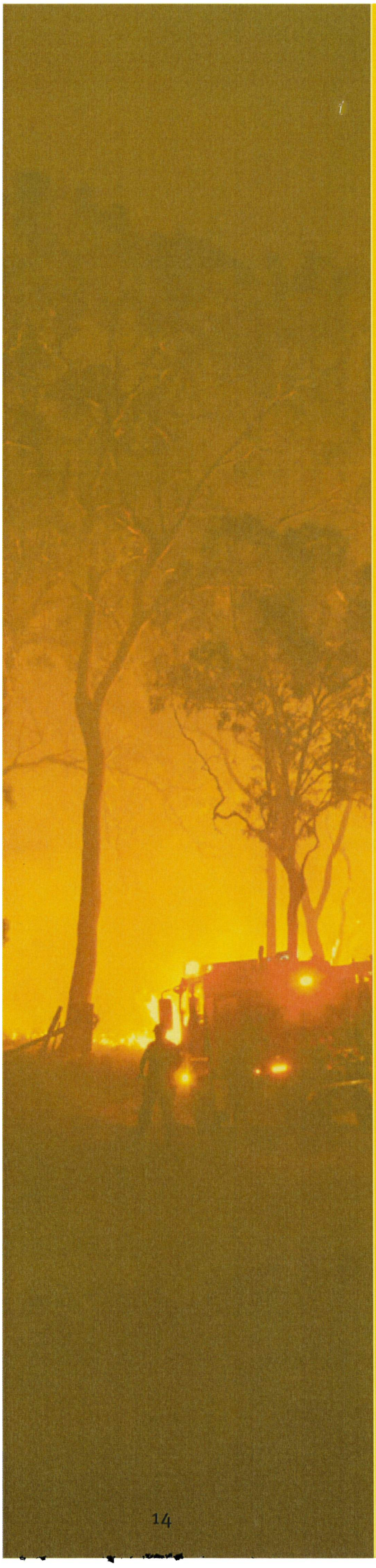
As the fire front arrives:

- [ ] Disconnect hose and fittings and bring inside.
- [ ] Go inside for shelter.
- [ ] Drink lots of water.
- [ ] Shelter in your house on the opposite side from the approaching fire, in a room with multiple escape points.
- [ ] Patrol and check for embers inside, particularly in the roof space.
- [ ] Check on family and pets.
- [ ] Maintain a means of escape.
- [ ] Continually monitor conditions.
- [ ] Stay tuned to information channels.



After the fire front passes:

- [ ] Stay tuned to information channels.
- [ ] Contact friends and family to tell them you are safe.
- [ ] Continue to check for small spot fires and burning embers:
  - » Inside your roof space.
  - » Under the house.
  - » On verandahs and decks.
  - » In roof lines and gutters.
  - » Under floorboards.
  - » In wood piles.
  - » In garden beds.



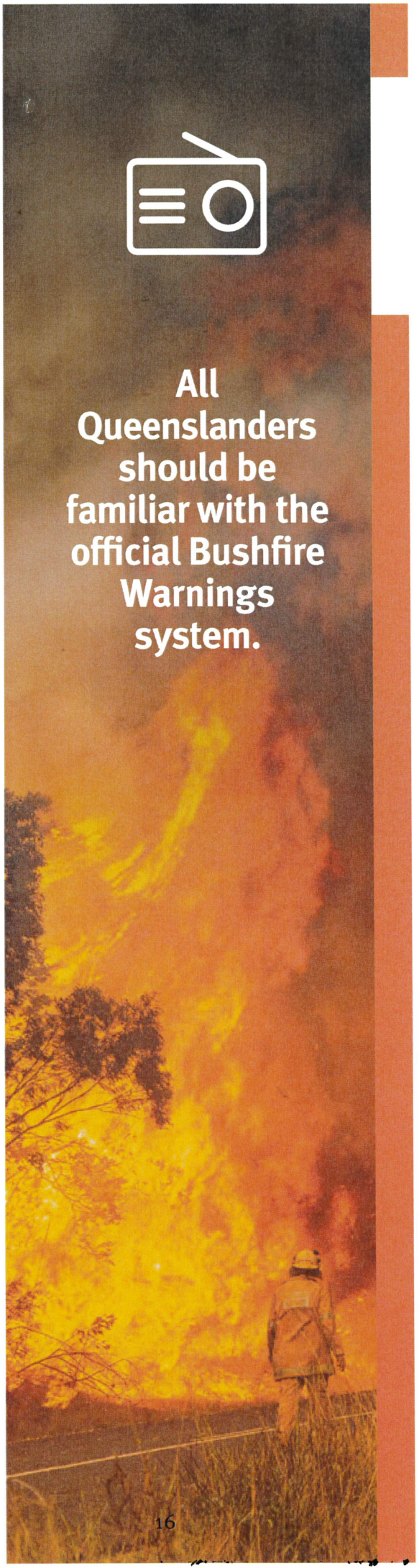
YOUR BUSHFIRE EMERGENCY KIT.

If you choose or are forced to stay at your home, a Bushfire Emergency Kit will equip you to extinguish small fires and provide you with basic protection from heat, smoke, and flames. Make sure you have enough supplies for everyone staying.

 Hat	 Safety glasses
 Smoke mask	 Long sleeve shirt (natural fibres)
 Water bottle	 Gloves
 Jeans or long pants (natural fibres)	 Boots

- Batteries
- Blankets (natural fibres)
- Bucket
- Drinking water
- Fire extinguisher
- First aid kit
- Hoses
- Knapsack sprayer
- Ladder
- Medication and prescriptions
- Mop
- Mobile phone and charger
- Radio (battery operated)
- Shovel
- Torch
- Towels





All Queenslanders should be familiar with the official Bushfire Warnings system.

TUNE IN TO WARNINGS

When there's a bushfire in your area, it's up to you to take notice, seek information, make decisions, and act. Tune into local media including radio, official social media feeds and websites. Don't assume you will receive an official warning as a fire approaches.

Current Bushfires Map
www.qfes.qld.gov.au/Current_Incidents

Find your local ABC Radio Station
www.abc.net.au/newsradio

Find your local commercial radio
www.commercialradio.com.au

QFES Facebook
@QldFireandEmergencyServices

QFES Twitter
@QldFES

QFES website
www.qfes.qld.gov.au

Call Triple Zero (000) if your life or property is under threat.

ADVICE

If you get an Advice warning, you'll be asked to **STAY INFORMED** or **AVOID SMOKE**. You should:

- Follow health guidance and monitor air quality if there's significant smoke.
- Stay indoors, close windows and doors, and keep medications close by.
- Avoid driving through smoke and be aware of firefighters working in the area.
- Decide what you will do if the situation changes.

WATCH and ACT

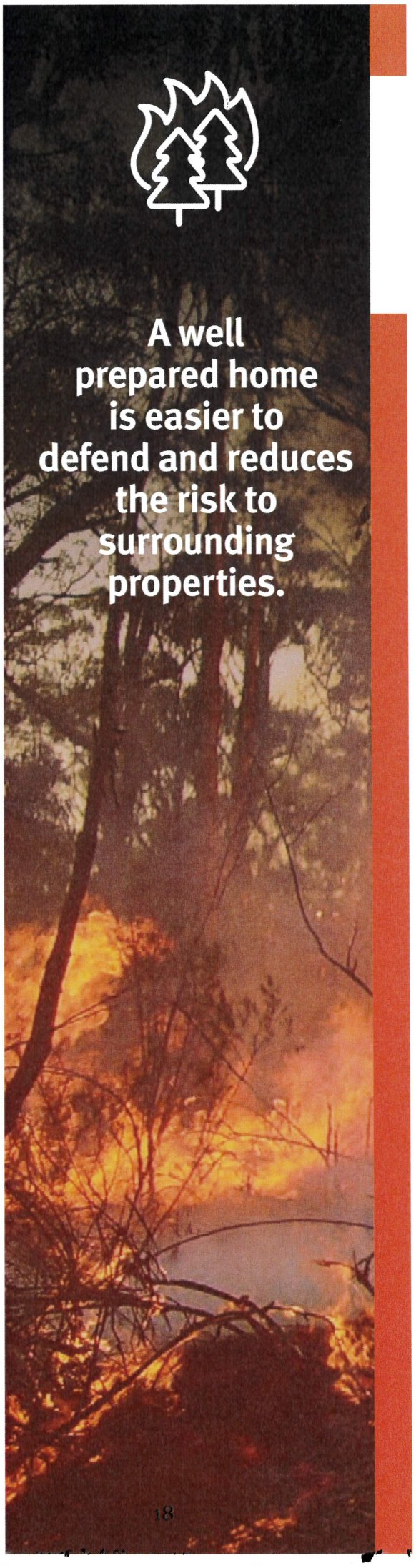
A Watch and Act warning will advise you to **PREPARE TO LEAVE** or **MONITOR CONDITIONS**. You should:

- Decide where you will go and how you will get there if you have to leave.
- Pack essential items such as important documents, food and water, medications, and protective clothing.
- Stay hydrated.
- Move flammable items away from your house.
- Fill containers with water for drinking and firefighting.
- Help others prepare for the fire.
- Avoid smoke – stay indoors, close windows and doors, and avoid driving through smoke.
- Be aware of firefighters working in the area.

EMERGENCY WARNING

An Emergency warning will prompt you to **LEAVE IMMEDIATELY** or **SEEK SHELTER IMMEDIATELY**. You should:

- Wear protective clothing, stay hydrated and keep vital medications with you.
- Check for road closures on 13 90 40 and let others know of your intended travel route if you're leaving.
- If you can't leave safely, or a 'seek shelter' warning is issued for your area:
  - Stay indoors, preferably inside a brick building.
  - Close windows and doors.
  - Move flammable items away from your house.
  - Fill containers with water for drinking and firefighting.
  - Bring pets inside.



PREPARE

Preparation is the key to survival.

Use this checklist as a guide to start preparing your home before the start of bushfire season.

Structure:

- ☐ Clear gutters and roof of leaves, twigs, bark and other debris. Consider installing gutter guards.
- ☐ Enclose open areas under decks and floors.
- ☐ Install steel wire mesh screens on windows, doors, vents, and weep holes.
- ☐ Point LPG cylinder relief valves away from your house.
- ☐ Check and maintain firefighting pumps, generators, and water systems.
- ☐ Seal gaps in external roof and cladding.
- ☐ Remove flammable items away from your home (such as woodpiles, mulch, boxes, hanging baskets, and outdoor furniture).

Vegetation:

- ☐ Reduce vegetation along access paths.
- ☐ Mow your lawn regularly.
- ☐ Remove excess flammable materials such as long dry grass, dead leaves, and branches.
- ☐ Trim low-lying branches around your home to a height of two metres from the ground.

Access:

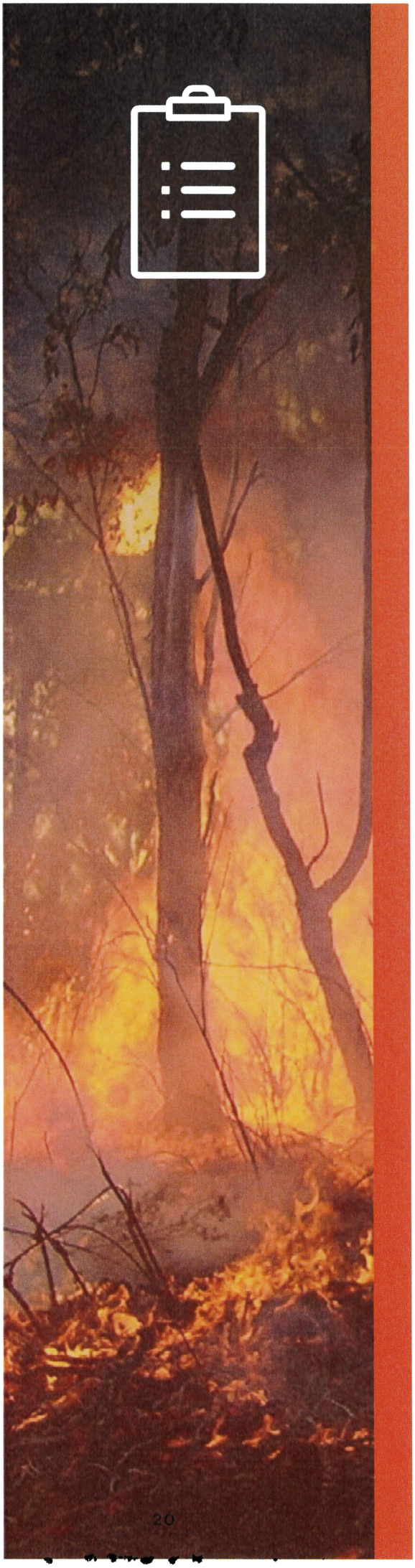
- [ ] Display house number at road.
- [ ] Ensure adequate space for fire trucks to access your home (at least four metres wide and high with turn-around area).

Personal:

- [ ] Gather sufficient personal protective clothing and equipment for all persons and store so that they are readily accessible.
- [ ] Prepare your evacuation kit or emergency kit.
- [ ] Stock your first aid kit.
- [ ] Check insurance policies are adequate for home and vehicles.
- [ ] Review and update your Bushfire Survival Plan as a family each year.
- [ ] Make a contingency plan.
- [ ] Note your Neighbourhood Safer Place, if available.

An unprepared property is not only at risk itself but may also present an increased danger for your neighbours.





CREATE YOUR BUSHFIRE SURVIVAL PLAN TODAY.

Make your Bushfire Survival Plan together as a family, tear out and display it for everyone to note. Share your plan with your family and friends.

Bushfire is a very real risk across Queensland, so make sure you are prepared now.

Don't wait until it's too late.

Include a contingency plan

Bushfires are unpredictable and plans can fail. A contingency plan that identifies your alternate options may save your life if you are caught in a fire. You need to consider:

- What will you do if you are away from home (work, school, shopping)?
- What if your pet is scared and you cannot find them?
- What if you are home alone?
- What if you have guests staying with you?
- What will you do if your travel route is cut off?
- What will you do if you are trapped in your home?
- Where will you go if you had planned to stay but it is now unsafe and you need to leave?

OUR BUSHFIRE SURVIVAL PLAN

Date: _____

OUR DETAILS

Names: Contact Number:

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

Address: _____

_____

Lot / Plan No. _____

EMERGENCY DETAILS *(name / phone / policy / account)*

Fire, Police, Ambulance: 000

Insurance Provider: _____

Local Council: _____

Electricity Provider: _____

Gas Provider: _____

Water Supplier: _____

Phone Company: _____

Internet Provider: _____

Bank: _____

Doctor: _____

Vet: _____

Work: _____

School: _____

Neighbours: _____

_____

_____

Other: _____

_____

LEAVING

Who will leave early?

What will be your trigger to leave?

Where will you go?

How will you get there?

☐ Do you have your evacuation kit ready?

What else will you take?

What is your plan for your pets or livestock?

STAYING

Who will stay?

What is the plan for livestock and pets?

Before there is a fire, how will you get yourself and your property ready?

As the fire approaches, what steps will you take so you and your home can withstand the fire?

As the fire front arrives, where will you safely monitor the fire from inside your home?

After the fire has passed, what areas of your property will you check for spot fires and burning embers?

CONTINGENCY PLAN

What will you do if things don't go to plan?

Neighbourhood Safer Place - a last resort

A Neighbourhood Safer Place (NSP) is a last resort option. It is an identified local open space or building where people may gather to seek shelter from a bushfire. Before bushfire season, you should:

- Make sure you know if a NSP is available in your local government area. NSPs are not available in every area.
- Note the travel time and distance to your local NSP.
- Include your NSP details in your Bushfire Survival Plan contingency plan.

The main purpose of a NSP is to provide some level of protection to communities from the effects of a bushfire. Your NSP will not guarantee safety in all circumstances, and the following limitations need to be considered if you plan to use one as a last resort:

- Firefighters may not be present if they are involved in the operational response at other locations.
- Support personnel may not be present at the NSP.
- NSPs do not cater for animals or pets.
- NSPs do not provide meals or amenities.
- NSPs may not provide shelter from the elements, particularly flying embers.

If you have special needs you should think about what assistance you may require. A NSP may not be a suitable location for your evacuation. You will need to make appropriate arrangements with friends, family, or carers.

Visit the QFES website at **www.qfes.qld.gov.au** to find out about NSPs in your local government area.

If you're unsure about your level of risk or require assistance, call 13 QGOV (13 74 68) to book a Property Advice Visit.

© State of Queensland (Queensland Fire and Emergency Services) 2021
All Queensland Fire and Emergency Services material in this document -except any material protected by a trademark graphics, and unless otherwise noted - is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 license.



@QldFES

@QldFireandEmergencyServices

www.qfes.qld.gov.au

Scan code to provide feedback on this resource.

QFE00061 07/22A