

Bangor Bushfire Recovery Newsletter Issue 7



Local Stories

On January 17th I had spent my monthly day with the spinning group in Gladstone. Travelling north to Booleroo Centre I was so dismayed at the pall of smoke to the west in the Wirrabara Hills that I stopped and took a photo on my phone.

Arriving home at Deer Park Road Melrose I organised my evening meal and began to get alerts from the CFS on my phone and home phone advising us to evacuate. Friends also rang with the same advice.

Going outside and facing towards the fire front I was alarmed by the force of the wind coming from that direction, it was gusty and took me off my feet! I remember praying that the Lord would stop the fire and continued to pray during the night's ordeal.

Our fire plan was to Stay & Defend! So we started putting that plan into action. We cleared the carport and verandas of flammable material and loaded some valuables into the car. This done we travelled the 10kms to our farm to retrieve the water tank and firefighting unit onto the tray of our farm utility.

This we set up in the garden and prepared the generator to provide power to the high pressure pump on the back veranda and had that in readiness if the power was cut. Feeling we had all in preparation and it was now dark we travelled out onto the plain to see if we could see the fire.

After a while the mobile phone rang and we were being checked on by friend Sue Girdham who had rounded up her senior folk from Melrose into her care. So we headed for her home and sat around watching and waiting for news. During this time the hospital were also checking on our plans and whereabouts. At midnight Caleb Girdham came with the news that the fire front had been halted at the Rosslyn Road and now Melrose and our property were safe.

Trevor went to bed fully clothed when we got home but I stayed tuned to ABC 639 on a small battery powered radio, checking regularly the strength of the wind from the south until 3am when the wind dropped and I too climbed into bed fully clothed and slept until 6am.

We were very relieved that our Fire Plan had not needed to be fully fulfilled!

Gweneth McCallum
Melrose SA



FORESTRYSA | ARTICLE

3 June 2014

There is a lot of work still to be done in ForestrySA's Wirrabara Forest, almost six months on from the Bangor bushfire.

An estimated 90% of ForestrySA's Wirrabara softwood plantation was affected by the fire, leading to a loss of most of the mature plantation pine resource and closure of the entire forest. There have also been a number of previous fires at both Wirrabara and at the Jamestown Bundaleer plantation.

It is now business as usual for ForestrySA staff and contractors, who remain busy with clearing and salvage harvest operations.

A detailed review of the plantation is also underway, to develop a strategy for the Wirrabara Forest estate going forward. This is expected to take a number of months to complete and will identify log supply options for the future.

ForestrySA remains focussed on its recovery in the area and reopened the Wirrabara Picnic Ground, Ippinitchie Campground, King Tree Paddock and the "A" Plantation to visitors at the end of April.

It is hoped other forest areas will be reopened in the not too distant future. For more information and maps, visit www.forestrysa.com.

The Wirrabara Nursery is also in recovery mode. While some historic structures were sadly lost in the fire, the old potting shed, seed beds and chimney were left relatively unscathed.

And with the olive hedges and trees beginning the natural regeneration process and further site clean-up planned, it is hoped the nursery will soon be safe for visitors, providing a valuable insight into South Australia's plantation forestry history once again. Discussions have also been held with displaced local apiarists, who rely on ForestrySA's native forest areas as an important food source for their bee colonies.

ForestrySA is investigating how it can accommodate beekeepers in other areas, while the forest continues to recover from the fire.

And as ForestrySA staff work hard to rectify the damage left by the fire, the organisation remains steadfast in its commitment to fire protection into the future.

A fire tanker is now based at Wirrabara, providing extra weaponry in the event of a plantation fire and increased protection for the local community.

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ForestrySA



Useful Contacts

General recovery information

Bushfire Recovery Hotline

1800 302 787

www.sa.gov.au/safiresrecovery

Business Support and Information

Rural Business Support

1800 836 211 www.ruralbusinesssupport.org.au

Counselling and Support

Country Health SA 131 465

Beyond Blue 1300 22 4636

Youth Beyond Blue 1300 22 4636

Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800

For more information visit

www.sa.gov.au/safiresrecovery

Financial Counselling & Support

Salvation Army Financial Counselling Telephone Helpline 1800 007 007

Financial Support

Centrelink www.centrelink.gov.au