

Hi Everyone,

Unless it is brought in earlier, the official Bushfire Danger Period will commence as at the 1st of September 2009. After this date all fires to be lit in the open will require a permit issued by the RFS. The Brogo permit issuing officers this year are myself and Dave Lucas (Deputy Group Captain, Bega Valley North). Due to the lack of rainfall this year, both Dave and I are going to be VERY difficult to get a permit out of... Do not contact either of us EXPECTING to receive a permit this summer, we will weigh up the situation, i.e. the proposed hazard reduction and forecasted weather, before making any decision. Also, allow AT LEAST TWO WEEKS for either one of us to attend your property for an initial inspection.

Last year we had Brogo residents on four separate occasions decide to light up without a permit. Not knowing that it is the fire danger period is not an excuse - if you are lighting a fire it is YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to ascertain whether or not a permit is required. Warnings were issued to these offenders, however given the events in Victoria this past summer and the Bega Valley shaping up for what is looking likely to be our driest year on record (this year, 2009), I will not be so gracious this summer. To this end, I would like to draw your attention to certain sections of the NSW Rural Fires Act (1997), in particular the penalties relating to the following sections:

Section 87, relates to lighting a fire without a permit (during the fire danger period); Maximum penalty: 50 penalty units or imprisonment for 12 months, or both.

Section 88, relates to lighting a fire which is dangerous to a building (regardless of the fire danger period); Maximum penalty: 50 penalty units or imprisonment for 12 months, or both.

Section 100, relates to setting fire to property you do not own, or fire escaping your property; Maximum penalty: 1000 penalty units, or imprisonment for 5 years, or both.

In addition to this, Section 127 provides that persons suffering loss or injury from a fire you have lit may take legal action against you regardless of whether or not any of the above penalties are served on you.

Please be advised that the current monetary value placed on a penalty unit is \$110 - i.e. 50 penalty units = \$5,500.00 or 1000 penalty units = \$110,000.00

The NSW Rural Fires Act may be found here:

http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/nsw/consol_act/rfa1997138/

If you know of anyone who does not receive community emails, could you please print a copy of this for them. Fire safety is EVERYONE'S responsibility. Lets stay safe this summer.

Steve Maginnity

Captain Brogo Rural Fire Brigade
