



HUFF STUFF

Newsletter

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Greetings everyone,

As our villages take on the beautiful colours on autumn we are experiencing delightfully warm weather and cooler nights. The weather has been perfect for hazard reductions lower down the mountains but as usual not for the upper mountains.

There is a hazard reduction planned for Stavely Avenue, Blackheath which we were hoping would go ahead this weekend but the cold change due in on Friday has put a stop to that. It is unlikely that the window of opportunity will reopen before winter. However weather conditions were favourable for the Mount Solitary hazard reduction yesterday.

I'm sure you would have all seen the huge smoke plume, pictured below, generated by this hazard reduction, comprising 3476 ha and being managed by NSW National Parks and Wildlife. It was certainly a spectacular sight and attracted many people yesterday to Echo Point. Fortunately the smoke was drifting away from Katoomba.



Over the last few weeks there has been a smoky presence drifting in from other hazard reductions. Remember that you can check on *Fires Near Me* to get an idea on where the smoke may be coming from. It can drift in from many kilometres away and smells stronger at night.

From NSW RFS website:

“Smoke from hazard reduction

Hazard reduction is an important part of preparing for bush fires. It helps protect people, property and the environment.

Fire agencies and land managers work together to minimise the impact of smoke from hazard



reduction burning.

Controlled burns are planned well in advance. They're planned to have minimal impact on the environment and the community.

Before starting a hazard reduction burn, fire agencies and land managers consider weather forecasts and conditions, any impact on the community, and the need to complete this

important work to help reduce the risk of destructive fires.

While we use the best information and forecasts available, sometimes it's difficult to predict where smoke will spread and what kind of impact it will have on the community.

If you are likely to experience problems relating to smoke, think now about what you'll do.

Your health and smoke

Smoke from bush fires and hazard reduction burning can affect some people more than others.

NSW Health reminds people that children, older adults and people with heart and lung conditions are most susceptible to the effects of air pollution and excessive smoke.

If you have asthma or a lung condition, reduce outdoor activities if smoke levels are high and if shortness of breath or coughing develops, take your reliever medicine or seek medical advice.

Asthma sufferers need to follow their Asthma Action Plan and take their relieving medication where necessary. If symptoms get worse, asthma sufferers need to seek medical advice.

Further advice is available from the [Asthma Foundation website](#).

Here are some tips to stay safe during hazard reduction burning.

- Monitor the [NSW RFS hazard reduction page](#) for information about planned burns and smoke advisories in your area.
- Keep doors and windows closed to prevent smoke from entering your home.
- Remove washing from clotheslines.
- Ensure pets have a protected area.
- If you're driving through a smoky area, slow down, keep your windows up and turn your headlights on.

- Don't call Triple Zero just to report that it's smoky. Save Triple Zero for emergencies."

There is lots of good advice here so please share it with your neighbours and friends. And just to clarify – back-burning is different. Many people use the term back-burning when talking about hazard reductions or prescribed burning.

Back-burning is a last resort measure used to attack a wild fire by lighting up from a containment line and allowing it to burn into the fire front, thereby putting out the main fire. This technique is **only** used if the weather conditions are right and there is enough time available to put fire on the ground in an already volatile situation.



Back-burning in the Blue Mountains in 2013.

So now that we are coming to the close of the warm weather and the possibility of bush fires lessens we need to be mindful of the safety of our home heating systems, especially open fires and portable heaters. Remember to have your chimneys checked and watch small children near heat sources.

I hope to see some of you at the Mount Victoria Great Train Weekend 26th-27th May, celebrating the 150th Anniversary of the Great Western Rail to Mount Vic.

Regards, Mina Howard 0419 629 407

