

Prepare - Act - Survive



Why Blackwood is at risk of bushfire

Fire Authorities have assessed Blackwood and adjoining Simmons Reef, Golden Point and Barrys Reef as having an EXTREME bushfire risk. Local residents and visitors should be prepared for fire and have a plan for when the Fire Danger Rating is **SEVERE**, **EXTREME** or **CODE RED**.

This community information guide includes a map containing key elements of Blackwood's bushfire risk. The Blackwood community benefits from a **Community Fire Refuge** located at the Blackwood Fire Station (see page 13).

Important community bushfire safety information is provided to help you make informed decisions about how to survive a bushfire, whether you're a local resident or a visitor to the area. Planning and preparation can save lives in a bushfire. Use this community information guide to help prepare.



Prepare

It's important if **you** live, work and travel in this area, to plan what **you** will do if a fire threatens.

Understand **your** bushfire risk

- The Blackwood area has been assessed as having an EXTREME bushfire risk in accordance with the Victorian Fire Risk Register.
- Fires have occurred in adjacent forest areas. Despite the high potential, there is no knowledge of a running fire impacting directly on the township.
- Assess and prepare the capability of your property to withstand a bushfire.
- Be aware it is impossible for emergency services to protect every individual home or property.
- Bushfires move more quickly uphill, so properties situated on hills or ridges will be at greater risk.
- Remember your usual travel routes may be limited or blocked – know your local roads.
- In extreme wind conditions, and without any occurrence of fire in the area, roads and tracks may become blocked by falling trees preventing residents from leaving early.
- Limited access may prevent fire trucks reaching the Blackwood area.
- Know the daily Fire Danger Rating in the district where live or travel **www.cfa.vic.gov.au**

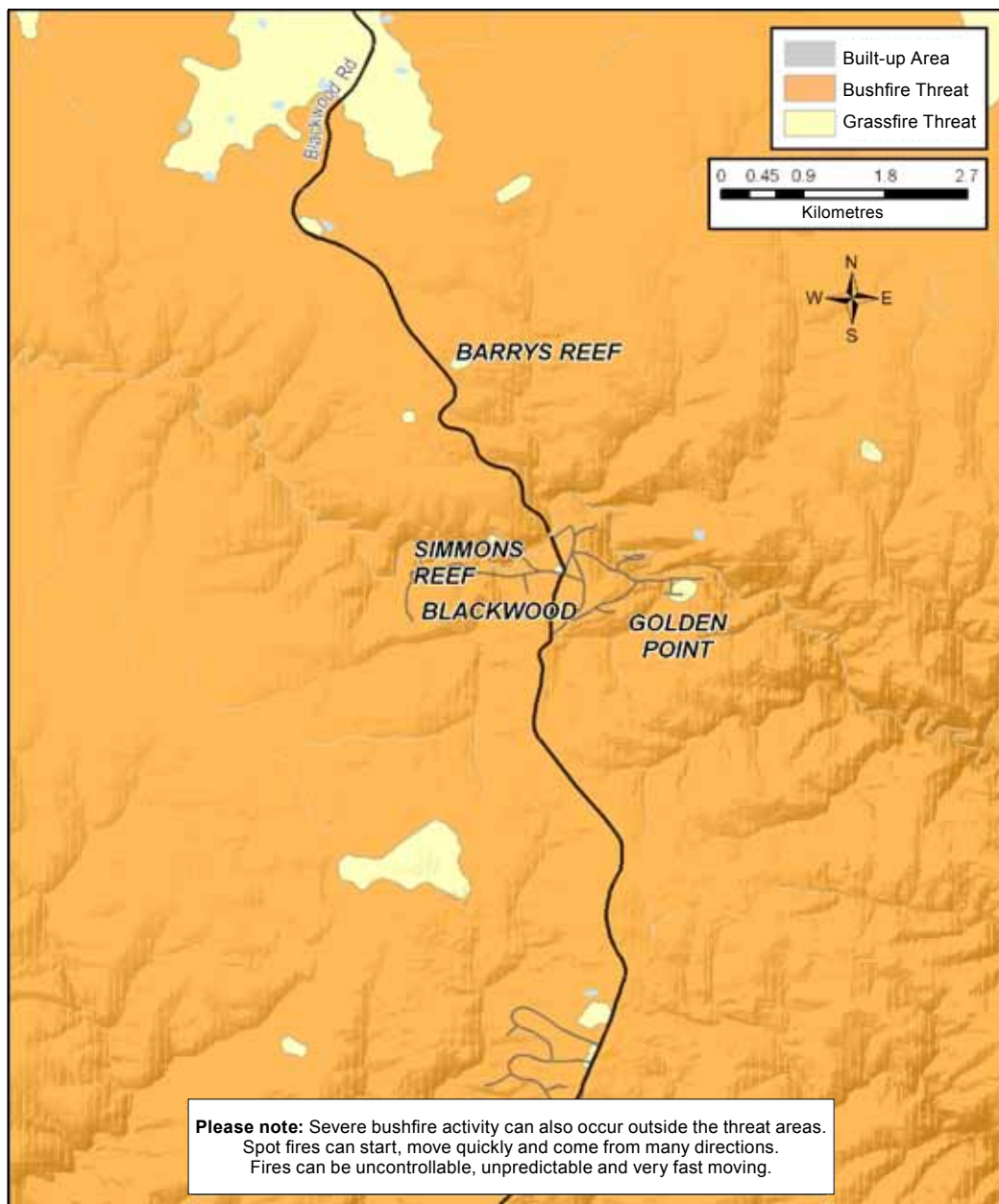
Reduce **your** bushfire risk

- Homes with too much vegetation and other flammable materials close to them are difficult to protect from bushfires.
- Long or narrow driveways may prevent a fire truck from being able to enter your property.
- Take advantage of rubbish removal and green waste disposal opportunities.
- Prepare your home and property against bushfire, burning embers and radiant heat.
- Even if your plan is to leave early, a well-prepared home has a greater chance of not being destroyed by bushfire.
- Assist your neighbours to reduce their bushfire risk as this may help make your property safer.
- **Develop and practise your Bushfire Survival Plan.**
- **You will also need to plan for your pets' and domestic livestock's safety.**
- You can attend or join:
  - A local Fire Ready Victoria meeting
  - A Bushfire Planning Workshop
  - A neighbourhood Community Fireguard Group
- **The Household Bushfire Self-Assessment Tool is available to help individuals assess the bushfire risk on their own property.**



You can download the CFA FireReady kit, containing the full Leaving Early Planning Template from **cfa.vic.gov.au**, or call **1800 226 226 (TTY 1800 122 969)**

Blackwood Fire Threat Map





Prepare

FACT

It is your responsibility to prepare yourself, your family and your home for the threat of bushfire. You need to act decisively in accordance with your **Bushfire Survival Plan** when bushfires threaten. Your survival depends on your preparations and the decisions you make.



Leave early

Leaving early is always the safest option.

Leaving early is more important when:

- The Fire Danger Rating is **CODE RED**. Homes aren't designed to withstand a bushfire during these conditions. Any fire that starts and takes hold will be so intense that you won't be safe to stay and defend your home – no matter how well prepared it is.
- There are children, elderly or disabled people in your home. People who are vulnerable due to age, health or any other reason, should always leave early.
- You have not prepared yourself or your property to give you and your home the best level of protection from a fire.
- Your house is not defensible. Some homes are not safe to defend because of their location or construction.

If you plan to leave, then you should leave well before a fire reaches your area and well before you are under threat. Follow the actions recommended for the Fire Danger Rating of the day (see pages 6 and 7). **Visit CFA website www.cfa.vic.gov.au**

Where will you go?

- Is it a safe choice? You may choose somewhere that suits your personal needs and circumstances, e.g. a family member's house in an urban area with a backyard for your pet, or shopping centre complex, or central business district of a large regional centre.
- If you don't have any other options, you may wish to consider the following townships:
Ballan, Bacchus Marsh or Ballarat.
- Travelling towards Trentham must be avoided if fire is burning north of the Blackwood area.
- Always tell someone that you are leaving and where you are planning to go.
- If you plan to travel by vehicle, ensure it is well prepared with sufficient fuel before you leave.
- Identify people in your locality who might need more help. Know your neighbours – encourage them to have support networks and offer to help them fill out a Bushfire Leaving Early Plan.

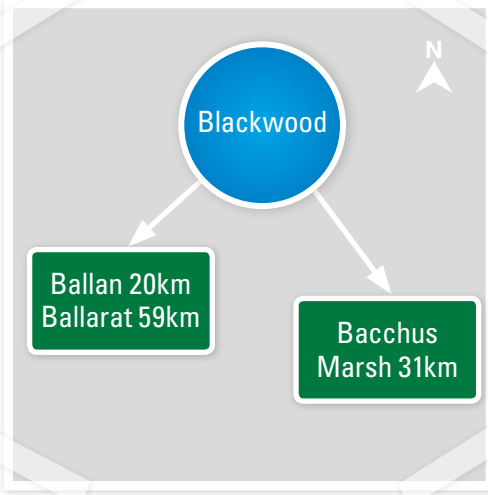
If you - or someone you care for - will need help to prepare and leave early when there is high fire risk, obtain a Red Cross **Bushfire: Preparing to leave early guide** at **www.cfa.vic.gov.au** or request a copy by phoning the **VicEmergency Hotline on 1800 226 226**

PREPARE. ACT. SURVIVE.

PREPARE. You must make important decisions before the fire season starts.

ACT. The higher the Fire Danger Rating, the more dangerous the conditions.

SURVIVE. Fires may threaten without warning, so you need to know what you will do to survive.



- Avoid roads that pass through forest.
- Strong winds and fire may cause trees to fall.
- Burning roadside vegetation will create radiant heat.



How you can stay in touch

- Bookmark the VicEmergency webpage (www.emergency.vic.gov.au).
- Follow CFA on Twitter (www.twitter.com/cfa_updates).
- Join the CFA Facebook page (www.facebook.com/cfavic).
- Access the CFA mobile website at www.cfa.vic.gov.au/mobile
- Download the VicEmergency app if you have a smartphone or tablet Apple (App Store) and Android (Google play).
- Beware, cordless home phones will NOT work if the mains power supply is cut.
- Wireless communications, internet and landlines may vary between service providers.
- Mobile phone coverage in and around Blackwood is generally poor to non-existent, and may not be accessible during times of emergency and may vary between service providers.
- There is a community alerting siren in Blackwood, see page 8 for further details.
- Sirens sounding nearby are a trigger for you to seek information, as they may indicate fire activity in your area. When you hear a siren, further information may be available via ABC local radio, commercial and designated community radio stations, and SKY News TV (see page 16).
- Regularly observe what is happening outside and check all information sources.

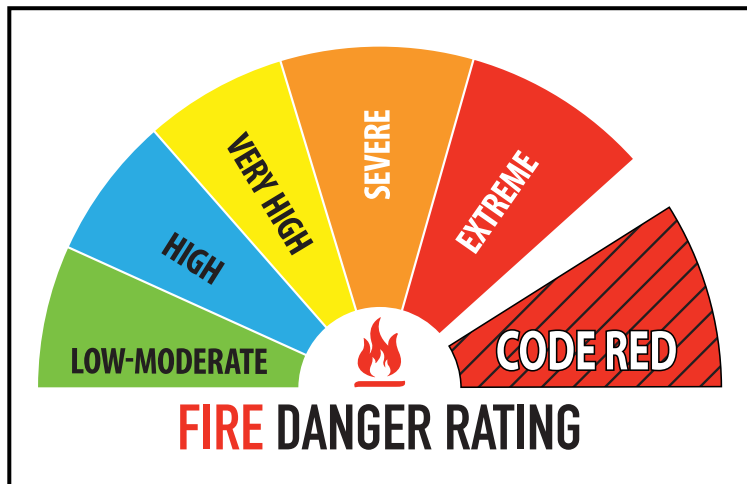


A written fire plan may save your life - would you remember a plan that's just in your head if your surrounded by smoke, heat, flame and noise?



Act

Note *your* district's
Fire Danger Rating
daily as *your* trigger
to act.



Blackwood is in the Central Fire District



Triggers

CODE RED

EXTREME

SEVERE

VERY HIGH

HIGH

LOW- MODERATE

Actions

What does it mean?	What should I do?
These are the worst conditions for a bush or grass fire. Homes are not designed or constructed to withstand fires in these conditions. The safest place to be is away from high risk bushfire areas.	Leaving high risk bushfire areas the night before or early in the day is your safest option – do not wait and see. Avoid forested areas, thick bush and long, dry grass. Know your trigger. Make a decision about: –when you will leave –where you will go –how you will get there –when you will return –what you will do if you cannot leave
Expect extremely hot, dry and windy conditions. If a fire starts and takes hold, it will be uncontrollable, unpredictable and fast moving. Spot fires will start, move quickly and will come from many directions. Homes that are situated and constructed or modified to withstand a bushfire, that are well prepared and actively defended, may provide safety. You must be physically and mentally prepared to defend in these conditions.	Consider staying with your property only if you are prepared to the highest level. This means your home needs to be situated and constructed or modified to withstand a bushfire, you are well prepared and you can actively defend your home if a fire starts. If you are not prepared to the highest level, leaving high risk bushfire areas early in the day is your safest option. Be aware of local conditions and get information by listening to ABC Local Radio, commercial and designated community radio stations or Sky News TV, going to www.cfa.vic.gov.au or call the VicEmergency Hotline on 1800 226 226
Expect hot, dry and possibly windy conditions. If a fire starts and takes hold, it may be uncontrollable. Well prepared homes that are actively defended can provide safety. You must be physically and mentally prepared to defend in these conditions.	Well prepared homes that are actively defended can provide safety – check your bushfire survival plan. If you are not prepared, leaving bushfire prone areas early in the day is your safest option. Be aware of local conditions and get information by listening to ABC Local Radio, commercial and designated community radio stations or Sky News TV, going to www.cfa.vic.gov.au or call the VicEmergency Hotline on 1800 226 226
If a fire starts, it can most likely be controlled in these conditions and homes can provide safety. Be aware of how fires can start and minimise the risk. Controlled burning off may occur in these conditions if it is safe – check to see if permits apply.	Check your bushfire survival plan. Monitor conditions. Action may be needed. Leave if necessary.



Act

Planned Emergency



Understanding Warnings

- A warning will be issued when any type of emergency could impact you or your property.
- Warnings aim to provide you with the best advice and information on what is happening to help you make good decisions to protect yourself and others.
- Remember: don't rely on an official warning to leave. Emergencies can start quickly and threaten you within minutes.
- Always use more than one source for your emergency information.

Evacuation

You may be advised to evacuate by police or emergency services. In fast-moving situations, you may not always receive a warning or recommendation to evacuate. Stay informed, aware of local conditions and the Fire Danger Rating, so that you can plan ahead and make the right decision in a bushfire. Leaving early is always the safest option. Refer to 'Community Evacuation Information', available at

www.police.vic.gov.au

Should a recommendation to evacuate be made, the following advice would apply:

- A fire is rapidly advancing.
- If advised, travel to the evacuation destination as advised by emergency services.
- Strictly follow all instructions and advice.



Community information

- A newsletter containing updates for communities affected by an emergency.
- Can also be used as notification that an incident has occurred but there is no threat to community.



Advice

- An incident is occurring or has occurred in the area. Access information and monitor conditions.
- Can also be used as a notification that activity in the area has subsided and is no longer a danger to you.



Warning (Watch & Act)

- An emergency is developing nearby. You need to take action now to protect yourself and others.



Emergency Warning

- You are in imminent danger and need to take action immediately.



Prepare to evacuate/evacuate now

- An evacuation is recommended or procedures are in place to evacuate.

Agency Service Actions

Fire Agencies

- Protecting life is the highest priority
- Issue advice and warnings
- Control and manage fire fighting activities
- Where safe to do so protect:
  - Identified community assets
  - Property
  - The environment

Victoria Police

- Keep people safe and property secure
- Control traffic in bushfire areas
- Manage evacuations
- Register people who have evacuated
- Work with other agencies to keep the community informed

Blackwood

- Residents and visitors, enact your Bushfire Survival Plan in accordance with the Fire Danger Rating triggers on page 6 and 7

Moorabool Shire Council

- Activate Municipal Emergency Management Plans
- Support and work with Emergency Services and responding agencies
- Assist with the provision of local information to the Community and Media
- Activate and support Emergency Relief Centres when required
- Assist and support the Community to Recover from the emergency

NOTE: On Code Red days, Council services may not be available as usual

VicRoads

- Manage Road Closures on advice from Police and Fire Agencies
- Undertake safety inspections of roads prior to re-opening
- Provide advice to communities about road closures



Bushfire Survival

WHAT TO DO

Leave Early

- When the Fire Danger Rating is Code Red, leaving early is always the safest option
- Leave early destinations could include homes of families & friends who live outside the risk area, a nearby town or built up area

Always the safest option



Well Prepared

If leaving the high-risk area is no longer an option, there may be options close to where you are that could protect you. These include:

Your safety is



For more information on how to prepare your own
www.cfa.vic.gov.au VicEmergency Hotline

Options

- A well prepared home (yours or your neighbours') that you can actively defend on Severe & Extreme Fire Danger Rating days only
- Private Bushfire Shelter (bunker) that meets current regulations
- Designated community fire refuge

not guaranteed

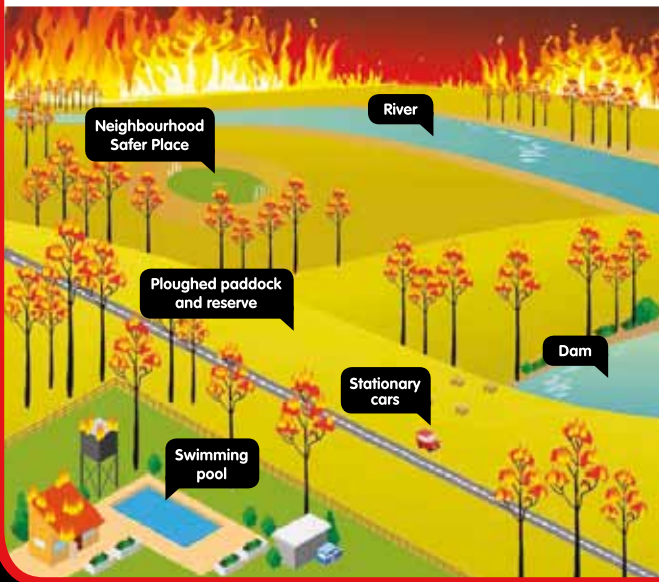


Last Resort

In situations where no other options are available to you, taking shelter in one of the below may protect from radiant heat:

- Neighbourhood Safer Place (place of last resort)
- Stationary car in a clear area
- Ploughed paddock or reserve
- Body of water (i.e. beach, swimming pool, dam, river, etc.)

High risk of trauma, injury or death



Bushfire Survival Plan:
1800 226 226

Survive

*Fire may threaten without warning so **you** need to know what to do to survive.*

Activate **your bushfire survival plan **early****

- Remember, bushfires can happen when least expected. Planning and preparation are essential.
- A last-minute decision may cost you and your family your lives.
- **You may not receive an official warning about a bushfire.**
- Do NOT expect a fire truck at your property.
- Your survival and safety depend on the decisions you make.
- Protecting people will always be more important than property.
- Always tell someone what you are planning to do.
- Observe the weather, including the direction the wind is blowing.
- Watch what is happening around you and where a bushfire may be located.

Leaving late is **DANGEROUS**

- Travel on roads in this area during a fire is dangerous.
- You may be impacted by fire, and visibility may be poor due to smoke.
- The roads may be blocked due to falling trees, collisions or emergency vehicles.
- Usual travel routes may not be accessible.
- Don't assume you can turn back, as the road may have become blocked behind you.
- Lives are more likely to be lost when people make a last-minute decision to flee a bushfire.
- The risk of being overrun by bushfire is very real.
- People caught in the open are likely to face severe and often fatal levels of radiant heat.
- Leaving late is a DEADLY option.

What is a Community Fire Refuge?



A Community Fire Refuge is specially constructed or a modified building that can withstand a bushfire. They are designed to be a short term **last resort shelter option** for people living close by if their plans have failed, or for those caught in a fire area. Going to a fire refuge **DOES NOT** guarantee your survival.

There is a Community Fire Refuge located in Blackwood at the new Blackwood CFA station on the corner of Greendale-Trentham Road and Terrill Street.

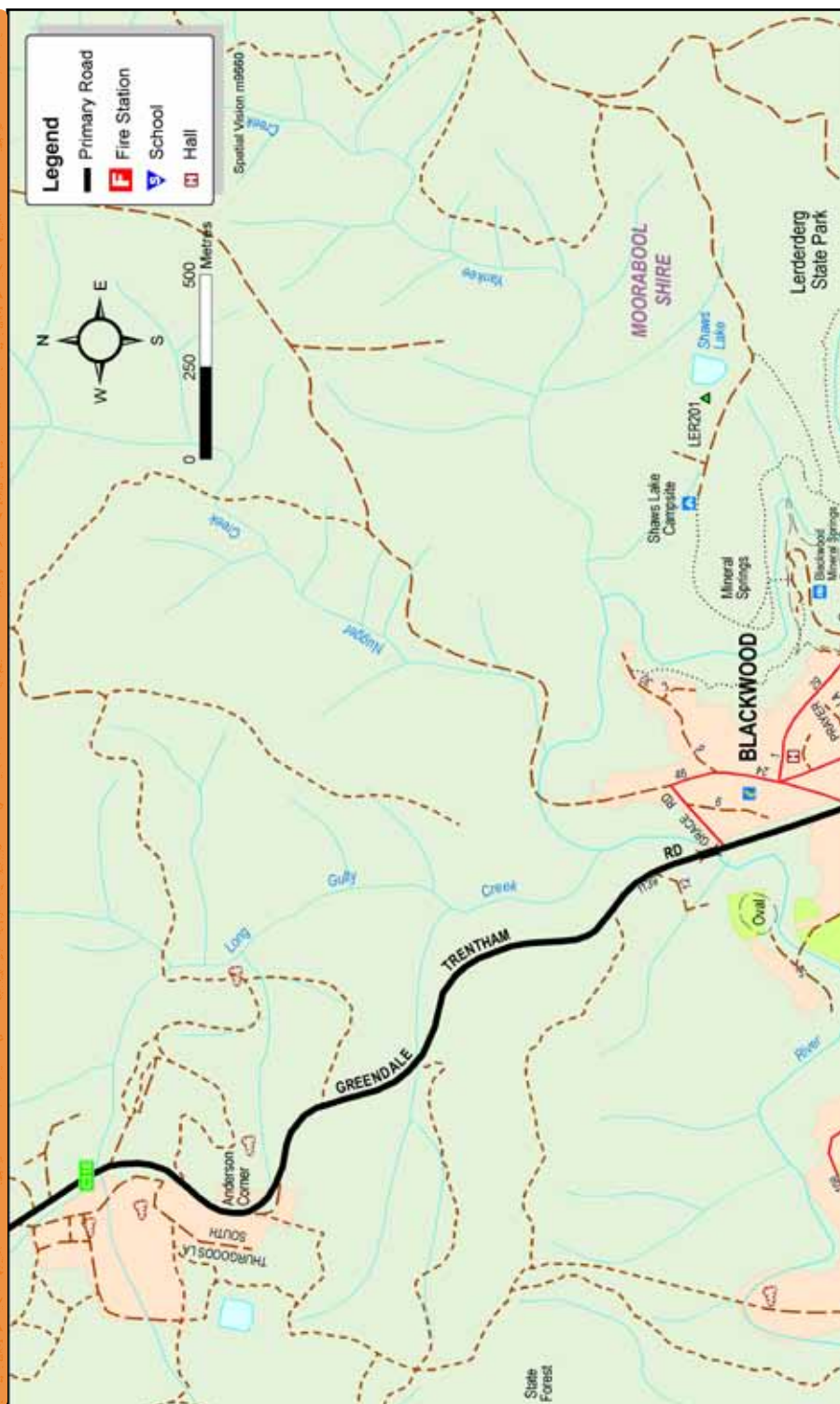
Having a fire refuge in your township IS NOT a substitute for having a well thought out and practiced personal survival plan - It is a **last resort survival option if all your other plans have failed. You should not plan to go to a fire refuge: travelling during fire is very dangerous.**

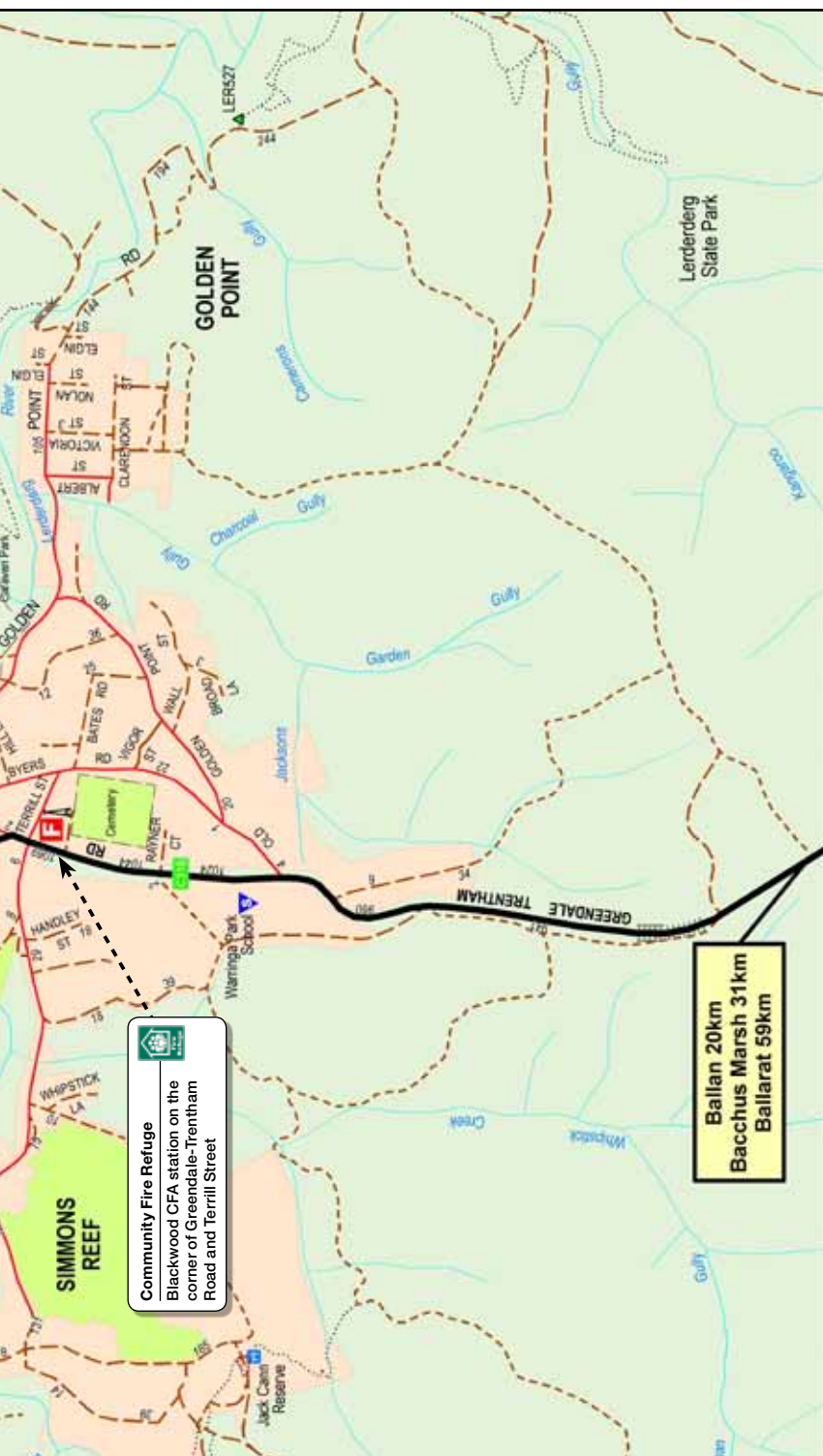
When will the Community Fire Refuge be open?

- A Community Fire Refuge will **only** be opened if there is a significant fire threatening the local area. It is NOT a drop-in centre on a hot day when there are no fires.
- The decision to open a Community Fire Refuge will be made by emergency services and the incident controller.
- If you are the first one at the refuge, press the entry button and follow the voice instructions. If there is a significant fire threat and the emergency services have activated the fire refuge you will be allowed to enter.

Please be aware of the following risks associated with travelling to and sheltering at the Community Fire Refuge.

- Travelling to a Community Fire Refuge or a Neighbourhood Safer Place will be dangerous when fire is in the local area. Roads may be busy or blocked by trees, smoke will make it hard to see and embers can cause spot fires kilometres ahead of the main fire.
- The number of people the refuge can hold is limited.
- The priority is people. Pets and livestock cannot be taken into a fire refuge.
- Services such as meals or medical services will NOT be provided.
- There is NO guarantee that any emergency services personnel will be at a fire refuge.
- For further information on fire refuges, including a short video on the opening and operation of fire refuges see www.firecommissioner.vic.gov.au
- See map on page 15 for the Blackwood Community Fire Refuge location.





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In EMERGENCY dial 000 (TTY 106)

Do not call Triple Zero for information or advice. Calling Triple Zero unnecessarily may put others who are in a genuine emergency situation at risk.

VicEmergency Hotline: 1800 226 226 **Emergency Contact Information**

Download the VicEmergency app, the official Victorian Government App for access to community information and warnings.

Monitor the VicEmergency App and tune into your emergency broadcaster and VicEmergency website (www.emergency.vic.gov.au) on days of high fire danger ratings is the most reliable way of staying informed. Mains power may be unavailable, or fail, during fire and emergencies – keep a battery powered radio available.

Emergency Broadcasters: Sky News TV, ABC 774 AM, ABC 107.9 FM, 3BA 102.3 FM, Power 103.1 FM

Road closures: 13 11 70 www.vicroads.vic.gov.au

National Park, State Forest and Park closures: 13 19 63 www.parkweb.vic.gov.au

School, early childhood services and bus route closures: www.education.vic.gov.au

24 Hour Wildlife Emergency: 13 000 WILDLIFE or 1300 094 535

24 Hour NURSE-ON-CALL: 1300 60 60 24

Bushfire Information:

VicEmergency website: www.emergency.vic.gov.au

CFA website: www.cfa.vic.gov.au

Follow CFA on Twitter: [www.twitter.com/cfa_updates](https://twitter.com/cfa_updates)

Join the CFA Facebook page: www.facebook.com/cfavic

FFMvic website (Planned burning): www.ffm.vic.gov.au



Further Information

Dept of Human Services: www.dhs.vic.gov.au/emergency

Forest Fire Management Victoria: www.ffm.vic.gov.au

Weather: www.bom.gov.au

CFA District Office: (03) 5329 5500 **(non emergency calls only)**

Moorabool Shire Council (03) 5366 7100 www.moorabool.vic.gov.au

Deaf, hearing impaired or speech impaired? **Contact the National Relay Service on 1800 555 677** if you use a **TTY, 1800 555 727** if you use Speak and Listen, and then ask for: **1800 226 226**