

# HORSES AND BUSHFIRES



## prepare-act-survive

Are my horses at risk if there is a fire? How many could I save, and how would I do this? Can I do this without putting people at risk?

Understand the new Fire Danger Ratings which are available on the fire services websites in each state, or in bushfire survival plans.

Think carefully and seriously about whether it would be possible to move your horses even if you were not faced with fire...then decide what you COULD do in an emergency. (Do you have too many horses to move? Will you take some and leave some? Will they load easily for transport?)

### Recommended strategies include:

- understanding bushfire behaviour so you know how to react;
- preparing your property (where possible remove combustible materials);
- preparing your horses if you must leave them on your property (remove rugs, halters: anything which might burn.) Provide access to areas with minimal vegetation; access to dam (s); leave internal gates open; do **not** put horses in confined areas - i.e. avoid stables, or small yards, .
- if possible consider moving your horses to safety (transport them to prearranged safe areas ) - but this needs to be before the fire starts in your area: so your source of fire information is very important!
- do **not** release your horses on to roads: they will put others at risk and be in more danger themselves
- consider microchipping: this is a permanent method of ID
- register horses in your PIC (property identification code) with the Department of Primary Industries so that the emergency services know you are there and what stock belong on your property

#### **If you expect to move your horses, CONSIDER:**

Traffic on the roads: what route will you take?  
Are your horses willing to load in normal circumstances?  
Where you will go? Do **not** depend on the 'authorities' to provide the a safe location... Arrange for somewhere to go well in advance: can you go to family members, friends, other horse owners in distant areas?  
Will your vehicle be sufficient to move your horses?.  
Prepare an emergency pack now, which includes: first aid for people and horses; a torch, food and water, blankets, fire resistant clothing, a portable radio with batteries, spare halters and ropes. Check the emergency services website for suggestions on other contents of this pack.

#### **If you expect to move your horses PLAN:**

When will you leave: what will be the trigger?  
Will the plan be different on weekdays/weekends?  
Will all members of your family leave early?  
Who will go with the horses and who will stay?  
Are there pets to consider? What else will you take?  
Do you have a contingency plan if it is unsafe to leave?  
Work out the safest place at home to put your horses, if you cannot move them, but you must leave. Are you prepared for this? Do the family understand the consequences?  
**Have you considered the value of human life against the value of your horses? It is ALWAYS more important to put your own safety before the safety of your horses!**