

Include Your Animals In Your Bushfire Plan

Plan ahead

It is important that everyone with animals has at least a basic plan to protect them during a bushfire. You need to do this well before any fire risk, so that everyone in your family knows what to do in an emergency.

Is your property registered with a Property Identification Code or PIC number?

If you have livestock – even just one or two – you should have a PIC number. Getting one is easy and free – just go to:



<https://pras.biosecurity.tas.gov.au/pras/ui>

Our PIC database tells us how many (roughly) of what species are in any given district – and this is vital information for us when responding to an emergency such as a bushfire. It helps us identify where help is most likely to be needed.

Please bear in mind that it is quite likely that, if you have evacuated, you will be barred from returning to the bushfire area until the situation is under control. And that could be several days. In such a case, it is very important that the NRE Tas emergency response staff know where livestock are likely to be within that bushfire zone. That's why you should register your property on the PIC database.

Is there an agreed trigger for moving your animals?

It is essential that any such decision to move your animals is made early – preferably at the first warning of an extreme fire risk. Do not leave that decision until the fire is at hand.

Do you have an alternative place to take your pets and/or livestock when your district is threatened?

The alternative place to take your animals should be arranged well beforehand so both parties understand and work out the confinement, feed and other care issues that impromptu animal guests bring with them. Have feed and equipment caches ready to go. Make sure the contact details of your vet and other animal service providers are provided to your potential host.

Are animal/stock crates, horse floats and loading ramps all in good order and ready to go?

Your plan should include an evacuation option. This means, for your livestock, you should have loading yards that enable quick loading of animals. It also means that, if you intend to transport the animals yourself, the float or stock crate must be kept serviceable and that you can attach it to your vehicle quickly. Make sure the towing vehicle is on hand during risk periods.

Are all your pets and livestock identified in case of loss during a bushfire?

Your animals need to be identified in case they get lost during the fire emergency. Examples include cattle and sheep NLIS ear tags, phone numbers written in stock crayon on rumps or sticky labels folded into manes.

Dogs and cats should be microchipped but also have names and addresses on their collars. Your name and address should be attached to bird or other small pet cages or carriers.

Is there a refuge or low fire risk area for your livestock?

If you are going to leave your livestock on the property, you will need an area of low fire risk that could be their refuge. This area could be a ploughed or eaten out paddock, irrigated pasture or bare yards with at least a 20m wide cleared or ploughed perimeter. At least open **internal** gates to give animals the best chance of finding a safer spot.

Ideally, the water supply in the paddock should be a dam or some other source that would not fail in the event of a fire (ie not with exposed PVC pipes and fittings). If yards are to be used, they must not have bush or flammable structures alongside.

- **TAKE OFF ALL RUGS, FLAMMABLE HALTERS AND COLLARS.**
- **DO NOT LEAVE ANIMALS IN STABLES OR TETHERED.**
- **DO NOT LET YOUR ANIMALS OUT ON TO PUBLIC ROADS.**

Is there a safe room for your smaller pets?

You do not want to be trying to find your small animals (dogs, cats, birds, rabbits etc.) during a bushfire emergency. So, you should confine them in a room within the house **before** you start preparing to protect your property from the bushfire.

Make sure you include a “safe room” in your bushfire plan and that everyone in your family knows which room that is.

Attach leads to dogs and place cats, rabbits etc., in carry cages very early on as they can be very difficult to catch later.

MAKE SURE ANY MEDICATIONS FOR YOUR PETS ARE KEPT WITH THEM.

And what about tomorrow?

Have an “emergency cache” ready – confinement and handling equipment, feed and water bowls and buckets etc., food and medications. You may need some of these things whether you leave your property or not. These items need to be kept in robust containers that can be easily loaded and not scavenged between times.

Include a list of contents, your name and address and the contact details for your vet. Place a reminder to add the feed and medications on the lid if not already inside.

For more information

- For information on preparing your livestock for bushfire, contact your local vet or NRE’s Animal Biosecurity and Welfare Branch on 03 6165 3777 or email: AnimalWelfare.Enquiries@nre.tas.gov.au
- For more general information about preparing your property for bushfire, go to the [Tasmania Fire Service website](#)



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