

# STRATHBOGIE TABLELAND

## GENERAL EMERGENCY INFORMATION

May 2011

*Strathbogie Tableland Action Group (STAG) received funding from the Shire to produce an emergency resource which would address issues specifically relevant to the Tableland. Part I was distributed in 2010 and focussed on bushfires. Part II provides general information in relation to how best to prepare for and deal with floods and electrical storms as well issues to be aware of when travelling on the Tableland. Also included is some basic first aid information.*



### **BUSHFIRE UPDATE**

In response to the recommendations of the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission, four Neighbourhood Safer Places have been identified within the Shire of Strathbogie:

- Mangalore Airport
- Service Centre on the Hume Freeway at Euroa
- Regatta Centre, Nagambie
- Longwood Community Hall

The Shire and CFA are currently developing a Township Protection Plan for Strathbogie and the CFA has been asked to assess several possible locations for the establishment of a Neighbourhood Safer Place on the Tableland.

# FLOODS

Warnings will be issued by the Bureau of Meteorology if there is likelihood of a potential flood threat from a developing weather situation or if specific catchments or rivers are about to flood. However, Flash Flooding can occur due to heavy rain and result in a very rapid rise of water over a short period of time.

**There may be little or no warning.**

## PREPARING FOR FLOOD

Familiarise yourself with areas on the Tableland that may be affected by flood such as property adjacent to creeks and low lying areas on roads where water may accumulate. Be aware of the possible need to find alternate routes on or off the Tableland – several months ago a tree closed the Euroa/Strathbogie Road for several hours while, at the same time, the Euroa/Merton Road was closed due to flooding.

### ***DO NOT DRIVE THROUGH FLOOD WATERS***

Many of you will have put together an emergency kit for the bushfire season; you may wish to expand this to cover other emergencies, ie ensure you have waterproof containers to protect your valuables, etc.

## IF A FLOOD IS IMMINENT

- listen to your local radio/TV for further information
- communicate with your neighbours
- stack furniture and possessions above likely flood level, on beds, in roof (with electrical items on top)
- move garbage, chemicals, poisons to a high place
- secure objects that could float and cause damage
- relocate vehicles and equipment
- move livestock to higher ground
- ensure pets are safe and secure
- check your car and fill it with fuel
- put sandbags in the toilet bowl and over all laundry/bathroom drain-holes to prevent sewage back-flow
- lay sandbags to protect your property

## IF YOU NEED TO EVACUATE

If you leave of your own accord advise Police, SES, family & neighbours

- pack clothing and emergency kit in waterproof bags.
- empty freezers and refrigerators leaving doors open (to avoid damage or loss if they float about)
- turn off electricity and gas
- take your mobile phone (and charger)
- check evacuation routes

## IF YOU STAY OR ON YOUR RETURN

- stay tuned to local radio/TV
- don't use gas or electrical appliances which have been in flood water until checked for safety.
- don't eat food which has been in flood waters
- boil tap water until supplies have been declared safe
- don't allow children to play in, or near, flood waters – they can contain sewage, chemicals and pollution and could wash them away
- do not walk or drive through flood waters. If you must, wear solid shoes and check depth and current with a stick. As little as 20cm of fast flowing water can knock you off your feet.
- stay away from drains, culverts and water over knee-keep.
- beware of snakes and spiders which may move to drier areas in your house



## **SEVERE WIND/ELECTRICAL STORMS**

The Tableland can be subjected to strong winds and may experience severe electrical storms, particularly during the summer period.

### **PREPARING FOR STORMS**

- trim trees and branches well clear of your home
- check/secure roofing and clear guttering and downpipes
- clear yard of loose materials that may blow about
- keep a list of emergency numbers and program them into your phone
- prepare an emergency kit of:
  - - portable radio, torch and spare batteries
  - - first aid kit and manual
  - - plastic sheeting, timber strips, hammer and nails, strong plastic bags
- check your home insurance is current and adequate
- check with your local electricity provider for advice on surge protectors and lightning conductors for homes and other buildings

### **WHEN A STORM APPROACHES**

- listen to local radio for storm warnings
- shelter and secure pets and animals
- if the storm is likely to be accompanied by lightning:
  - disconnect external aerial and power leads to radios and TV sets
  - disconnect computer modems, power leads and other electrical items
  - draw all curtains and keep clear of windows, electrical appliances, pipes and other metal fixtures (eg don't use the bath, shower, handbasin or laundry/kitchen sinks)
  - avoid the use of fixed telephones (in emergencies, make calls brief)
  - don't touch any metal, brick or concrete and don't stand bare foot on concrete or tiled floors



## **WHEN THE STORM STRIKES**

- stay inside, shelter well clear of windows and skylights
- continue to monitor the situation on your portable radio (don't use a fixed phone)
- if caught outdoors:
  - seek a solid enclosed shelter such as 'hard-top' metal bodied vehicle or solid building
  - avoid small open structures or fabric tents
  - never shelter under trees
  - if far from shelter, crouch (alone, feet together), preferably in a hollow. Remove metal objects from head/body. Don't lie down flat but avoid being the highest object.
  - if your hair stands on end or you hear 'buzzing' from nearby rocks, fences, etc. move immediately. At night a blue glow may show if an object is about to be struck.
  - if swimming, leave the water immediately
  - don't ride horses, bicycles or travel in open vehicles
  - stay away from metal poles, fences, clothes lines, etc.
  - don't fly kites or model aeroplanes with control wires
  - don't handle fishing rods, umbrellas or golf clubs, etc.
  - if driving, slow down and park away from trees, power lines, etc. stay inside metal-bodied (hard top) vehicles or caravans but don't touch any metal sections

## **AFTER THE STORM PASSES**

- check for damaged windows, walls or roof. Temporarily cover with plastic sheeting and nailed-on wooden strips.
- communicate with neighbours
- beware of fallen powerlines, damaged buildings and trees and flooded watercourses
- electrical storms may not always be accompanied by rain – if this is the case, check for any sign of fire and phone 000

## **LIGHTNING FACTS AND MYTHS**

- when struck, people do not glow or 'fry to a crisp' but the heart and breathing are often affected.
- only about 30% of people struck actually die and the incidence of long-term disability is low, particularly when appropriate first aid is applied promptly.
- if your clothes are wet, you are less likely to be seriously injured if struck, as most of the charge will conduct through the wet clothes rather than your body.
- lightning can, and often does, strike more than once in the same place.

## **FIRST AID IF STRUCK BY LIGHTNING**

Check for respiration and pulse, if absent apply immediate heart massage and mouth-to-mouth resuscitation (CPR) to lightning victim until medical help arrives and they will have a good chance of survival. (You won't receive a shock from the victim.)

Check for signs of electrical burns and cover the affected areas. If the person is breathing, cover any burned areas with a sterile gauze bandage, if available, or a clean cloth. Don't use a blanket or towel, as loose fibres can stick to the burn area.

# ON THE ROAD

*While the Tableland does not have a high volume of traffic it has a number of hazards that travellers need to be aware of.*

- The quality of our roads can vary significantly from straight stretches of two lane bitumen to single lane gravel with potholes, corrugations and sharp corners. Be particularly wary of gravel on the corners. You should always drive to the condition of the road not the speed limit.
- Animals do not recognise right of way and any of the following may appear from the side of the road directly in front of your vehicle: kangaroos, wombats, rabbits, snakes, deer, flocks of birds. If this happens, brake as quickly as you can but never swerve to avoid an animal as this could result in you hitting a tree or going off the road with far more serious consequences. While on the road you may also encounter domestic stock that have escaped from a paddock; approach slowly as they may act in an unpredictable manner.

If you hit a native animal and it is still alive phone Help for Wildlife on 0417 380 687 (keep this number in your car). Help for Wildlife will sedate, treat and rehabilitate the animal. If the animal has died you should contact the Shire Office on 1800 065 993 (same number applies out of hours and you follow the prompts) You should also contact the Shire Office if you hit stock or a domestic pet regardless of whether it is dead or alive. Do not approach an injured animal as they may still be able to inflict serious injury.

- On occasions when stock are moved along a road or are grazing on the roadside, the owner is obliged to erect signs at each end of the area involved. All vehicles should drive slowly through the animals to avoid frightening them which could cause them to bolt or run into the vehicle.
- If you encounter farm machinery on the road, you need to be aware that it is noisy and the driver may be unaware that you are approaching. Slow down and only pass when it is safe to do so.
- Roads on the Tableland are also used by a number of large trucks usually carrying stock or timber from nearby plantations. Be aware that they will not be able to swerve or stop as easily as a domestic vehicle or motorcycle.
- Trees and branches frequently fall over the road – these should be reported to the Shire Office on 1800 065 993 (24 hour service)
- During storms and high winds, be aware that power lines may come down and still be live – these should be reported to your power supplier.
- There are a number of dangerous intersections on the Tableland where visibility is poor and vehicles do not always give way. Some of these are:
  - Euroa/Strathbogie Road and Creek Junction Road
  - Harrys Creek Road and Old Bonnie Doon Road
  - Merton/Euroa Road and Galls Gap Road (where vehicles are hidden from view in a dip in the Merton/Euroa Road)
  - Tames Road and Ankers Road

All intersections should be approached with care – visitors to the Tableland may be unaware that they are approaching an intersection, particularly if it is obscured by vegetation.

If you are travelling alone, particularly at night, it is wise to make sure someone knows which route you will take and when you can be expected to reach your destination. This will enable assistance to reach you more quickly should you experience a breakdown or have an accident particularly as there will always be some locations on the Tableland without mobile phone coverage

Remember, if you are walking along the road you should always walk on the wrong side of the road facing into the oncoming traffic. That way you can see oncoming traffic and move to the side as they go past. It is also sensible to wear light coloured clothing or a flouro vest or jacket; they are very cheap and effective.

### **IF YOU COME ACROSS AN ACCIDENT**

- dial 000 – provide details of accident and location (if possible nearest intersection)
- ensure safety – check for fallen electricity wires, flammable liquids, etc.
- protect the scene by parking your car between it and approaching traffic
- switch on hazard warning lights or indicators
- if help is available request them to warn other motorists, particularly if the scene is not visible to approaching vehicles
- if at night, light the scene with headlights on low beam
- ensure that all occupants of the vehicle(s) are accounted for
- turn off the ignition of the crashed vehicle, apply the handbrake and chock wheels if on a slope



## **MEDICAL EMERGENCIES**

*STAG would like to thank Euroa Health for their input to this section of the resource.*

It is recommended that all households have someone trained in basic first aid and have access to a reliable first aid reference and first aid kit. Training and information can be obtained through organisations such as Red Cross and St John Ambulance.

A number of residents work in isolation on the Tableland – it would be sensible to have some form of communication in case of an accident: mobile phone if you are sure the area in which you are working has reception, UHF radio if you have someone who can monitor your calls.

### **HEART ATTACK**

Symptoms and signs of heart attack include:

- pain or discomfort in the centre of the chest – pain is sometimes severe and vice-like and radiates to the arm or the neck and jaw. It may be confused with pain associated with indigestion
- anxiety, confusion or distress or a sense of impending doom
- nausea and/or vomiting
- shortness of breath
- pale, cold, clammy skin
- sometimes an irregular pulse
- shock may develop, sometimes immediate collapse leading to absence of pulse.

If trained to do so, commence DRABC

If patient is conscious, sit them up

If pulse is weak and rapid or the person is light-headed, place them on their side, unless they are more comfortable sitting up

If unconscious, turn the casualty on their side and check that the airway is clear

Seek medical aid urgently

## **STROKE**

If you think someone may have had a stroke you need to act **FAST**

**F** – check the person's face, has their mouth dropped

**A** – can they lift both arms

**S** - is their speech slurred

**T** – time is critical, seek medical aid urgently

Persons who receive medical aid quickly can often completely recover from a stroke.

Reassure the casualty, they may be able to understand you even if unable to communicate.

If casualty is conscious, support the head and shoulders on pillows, loosen tight clothing, maintain body temperature and wipe away secretions from the mouth. Ensure the airway is clear and open.

## **BLEEDING**

If external bleeding occurs you should lay the casualty down and apply direct pressure to the site of the bleeding. Where possible, raise the injured part and loosen tight clothing.

Apply a clean dressing over the wound and bandage.

Seek medical aid.

**Do not give anything by mouth.**

## **BROKEN BONES**

Where broken bones may be obvious, or suspected, you should control any bleeding (as above) and cover wounds. The fractured area should be immobilised with slings, bandages or splints to prevent movement of the joints above or below the fracture. Do not move the casualty unless the situation is dangerous.

Seek medical aid.

## **BURNS**

Remove the casualty from any danger – this may be fire, electricity etc. - but make sure that you are not putting yourself at risk. If burns are caused by electricity, ensure the supply has been turned off (for high voltage/power lines, the current will need to be disconnected by the relevant electrical authority)

Smother any burning clothing with a blanket, jacket or water and then gently run cold water over the burning part for approx 10 minutes.

Cover the burn with a sterile, non-stick dressing and seek medical aid.

**Do not:** apply any lotions or ointments, prick or break blisters.

## **SNAKE BITE**

Symptoms and signs of snakebite:

- headache
- double vision
- drowsiness
- nausea and/or vomiting and diarrhoea
- pain or tightness in the chest or abdomen
- giddiness or faintness
- puncture marks about 1 centimetre apart at the site of the bite, although sometimes there may only be fang scratches on the skin. Bites are usually on the limbs, especially the legs
- breathing difficulties

Treatment for persons affected by snakebite:

- If trained to do so commence DRABC and seek urgent medical help
- Rest and reassure the casualty
- Apply a pressure immobilisation bandage over the bitten area and around the limb

## **RED BACK SPIDER BITE**

Red back spiders may be found across the Tableland usually in dark unfrequented spaces such as sheds, outdoor equipment, etc. and especially under old tin sheets and inside metal pipes. If bitten by a red back spider, commence DRABC if trained to do so.

Apply a cold pack over the area and seek medical aid as soon as possible

<b>EMERGENCY NUMBERS</b>	
<b>Ambulance, Fire, Police</b>	<b>000 (for all regions, includes CFA)</b>
<b>VICSES</b>	<b>132 500</b>
<b>Shire of Strathbogie</b>	<b>1800 065 993 (Mon to Fri 9am to 5pm)</b>
<b>Emergency Works</b>	<b>0419 447</b>
<b>Stock on Roads</b>	<b>1800 065 993</b>
<b>Power Failure – SP Ausnet</b>	<b>131 799</b>
<b>Origin Energy</b>	<b>132 461</b>
<b>Gas Emergencies</b>	<b>132 771</b>
<b>Origin Energy Gas Leaks</b>	<b>1800 808 526</b>
<b>LP Gas</b>	<b>132 462</b>
<b>Telstra Faults</b>	<b>132 203</b>
<b>Nurse on Call</b>	<b>1300 606 024</b>
<b>Help for Wildlife</b>	<b>0417 380 687</b>
<b>Vets – Euroa Clinic</b>	<b>5795 2888 or 0428 573 201</b>
<b>Strathbogie Clinic</b>	<b>5795 2811</b>

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