

# CFS FACT SHEET - AFTER THE FIRE



## Survive after the fire

Survival isn't just about what happens during the fire, it's also about how well you recover in the days, weeks and years after the fire.

### Returning Home

Look and listen for information on television, radio, the internet and other information lines to find out when an all clear advice has been issued and if it is safe to return home.

**Be careful travelling home:** watch out for downed power lines; fallen trees; low branches and burning debris; wandering animals; damaged infrastructure including walls, bridges, roads and footpaths; emergency services, who may still be working in the area.

A fire can be very destructive and selective, leaving one home untouched and destroying the next. If your home has been badly fire damaged and you need a place to stay, seek help from welfare agencies.

**You need to be mentally and emotionally prepared when returning to your property.** If you live alone, you may want to bring someone with you when you first return. It is best that you prepare mentally, have support and offer support to others during this time.

**Access to your home should be limited to adults initially for safety reasons.** When you arrive home you should be very cautious and aware of the following potential hazards: live electricity; leaking gas (odour or hissing); septic or sewage leaking; hot embers; trees and over hanging branches; major structural damage.

## How to look after your emotional health

Being in a bushfire may be the most traumatic experience of your life. It is as important to look after your emotional recovery as it is to treat physical injuries.

- Make sure you and your family are safe
- Follow your normal routine if you can
- Get information about how people feel after an emergency, and how long it takes to feel better
- Spend time with people you care about
- Talk about what has happened to you
- Talk to your family - especially your children - about how they feel
- Take time to rest and do things you enjoy
- If you are not feeling better, seek help from a mental health professional, doctor, or recovery worker

Research shows that those who have prepared for a bushfire recover better than those who were not prepared.

