



Our Bushfire Survival Plan – Wayne Haggar, Kinglake

Extract of witness statement to the 2009 Victorian Bushfire Royal Commission

12. We had a carefully considered fire plan: if we felt we had enough time for a safe evacuation, then my wife, Linda, would leave with our daughter and our animals. Her plan was to evacuate to our eldest daughter's house in Mt Evelyn, believing it would be safe there. We were not aware of any local fire refuge. My plan was always to stay and defend our home. The trigger for Linda to leave would be official warnings from the CFA or Police to instigate our fire plan. Our decision to use this warning system as our trigger was based upon our experience of the 2006 fires, when ample warning was given over the radio (ABC 774) and by a CFA fire unit actually travelling down our street giving short blasts on its siren to gain residents' attention and warning of approaching fire. This was then followed up by police who came down to our property.

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14. [On Black Saturday] I watched commercial TV news on the evening of February 6, saw the weather forecast and heard the Premier's warning. I certainly took notice of this, as did my wife. We have become a bit distrustful of media sensationalism but believed the Premier's warning because we considered it to be an "official" warning. ...

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16. We prepared our protective clothing and checked that our petrol-driven fire pump was in an accessible position in the morning. We also reviewed the CFA website. The Kilmore East fires were reported on the website but there was no indication of the scale of these fires and Kilmore East is more than an hour's drive from our property, so we had no sense of impending danger.

17. Wishing to err on the side of caution, we got our gutter plugs ready; prepared the mops we had purchased to assist us during an ember attack; and filled two children's pools to sit on our deck with water. Indoors, we filled our bath and basins, prepared a supply of fresh drinking water, got torches ready, charged mobile phones, kept keys in the cars' ignitions, got the dogs' leads and a non-powered telephone ready to plug in.

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