

How do Residents in Bushfire Prone Areas View the Bushfire Risk of their Local Area and their Homes?

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1. Residents perception of the bushfire risk of their local area and their own property
2. Which parts of their homes would residents seek shelter in during a bushfire and which parts would they avoid.
3. What improvements do residents believe might improve the ability of their home to respond to the local bushfire risk?

LARGER STUDY

Locations (178 responses)

8 places in two regions:

- Blue Mountains, NSW: [Mount Wilson](#), Linden, Lapstone, Emu Plains
- Central Coast, NSW: [Pretty Beach](#), Wagstaffe, Hardys Bay, Killcare

Resident Groups (74 responses)

Representing:

- Mothers with dependent children
- Elderly / retirees
- Able bodied
- Able minded

252 Responses in Total



THE SAMPLE SITES

Mount Wilson Blue Mountains, NSW

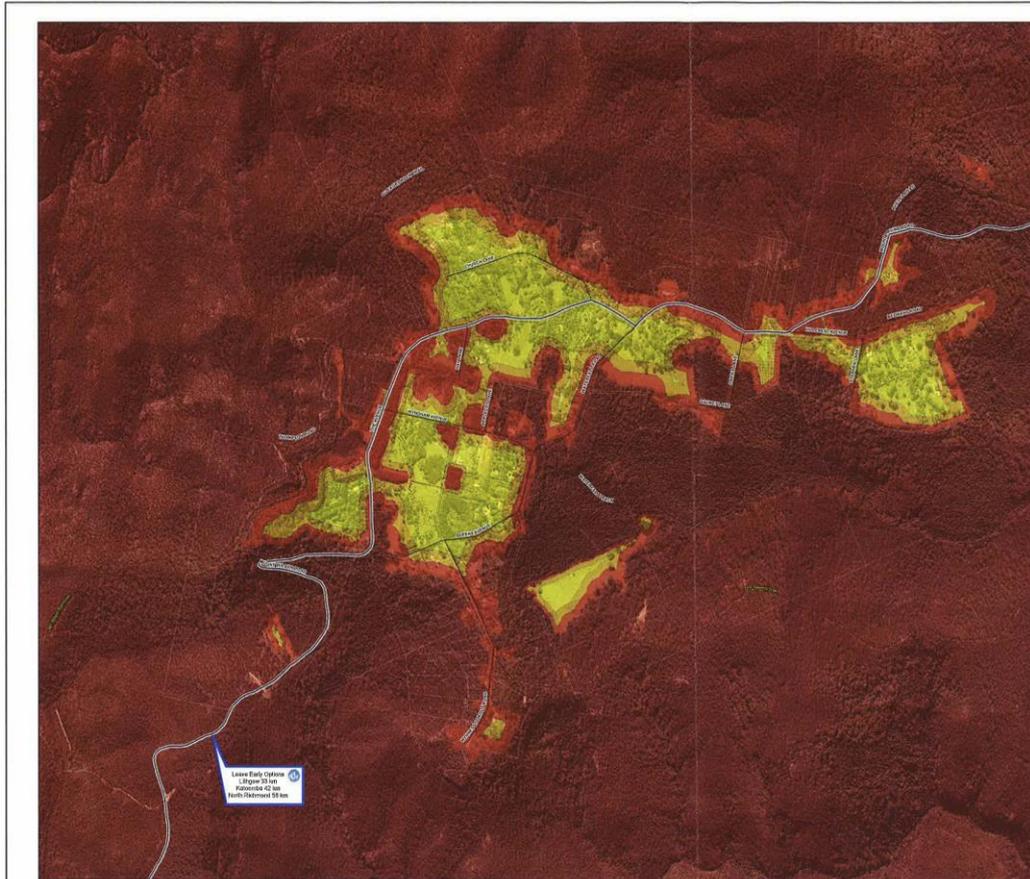


Pretty Beach Central Coast, NSW



MOUNT WILSON

NSW RFS, COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PROGRAM OPEN DAY 28 JULY 2012



Bush Fire Survival Map



Mount Wilson - DRAFT

What is your Bush Fire Threat?

- Flame Impact**
 You and your property are likely to be directly impacted by flames, deadly levels of radiant heat, significant embers and smoke from a bush fire. The risk of death and property destruction from both fire is greatest within this zone. Leaving early is your safest option.
- Radiant Heat**
 You and your property are likely to be impacted by deadly levels of radiant heat, significant embers and smoke from a bush fire. You and your property must be well prepared if you choose to stay and defend.
- Ember Impact**
 You and your property are likely to be impacted by low levels of radiant heat, significant embers and smoke from a bush fire. You and your property must be well prepared if you choose to stay and defend.
- Be Aware**
 Embers can cause fires kilometres from the main fire and can impact on houses up to one hour before the fire arrives and several hours after their fire has passed. It only takes one ember to ignite your house and property. You will need to monitor your property carefully.

NOTE: Impact areas have been prepared at a community level and are based on an Extreme Fire Danger Rating. Information provided on this map is not to be used for building / planning purposes.

- Neighbourhood Safer Place**
 Neighbourhood Safer Places are a Place of Last Resort. You should not rely on a Neighbourhood Safer Place as a fire shelter. Leave early to save the lives of your family.
- Main Road**
 Roads may become impassable during a bush fire. Your safest option is to Leave Early.
- Leave Early**
 Leaving early to save the lives of your family.

Your Bush Fire Survival Options



PREPARE. ACT.SURVIVE.

KEEP YOURSELF INFORMED
 Emergency Level 1: 000
 Emergency Level 2: 1800 NSW RFS
 1800 255 212
www.facebook.com/nswrfs
www.twitter.com/nswrfs

BUSH FIRE INFORMATION LINE
 1800 NSW RFS
 1 8 0 0 2 5 5 2 1 2
www.rfs.nsw.gov.au

PRODUCTION INFORMATION
 Base Data: LIDAR Contours and Topo Database
 Map Projection: GCS GDA 1984
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 Produced by: Cameron Louie

- WARNING INFORMATION**
- The map has been prepared by the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS) using data supplied to it by other agencies and is not to be used for any other purpose.
 - The RFS does not warrant or endorse the data used to prepare this map. The map may contain errors and omissions. The RFS is not responsible for any loss or damage caused by the use of this map.
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BUSH FIRE SURVIVAL PLAN

Always be prepared; a well prepared family and home is more likely to survive.
 Download a copy of the Bush Fire Survival Plan from www.rfs.nsw.gov.au

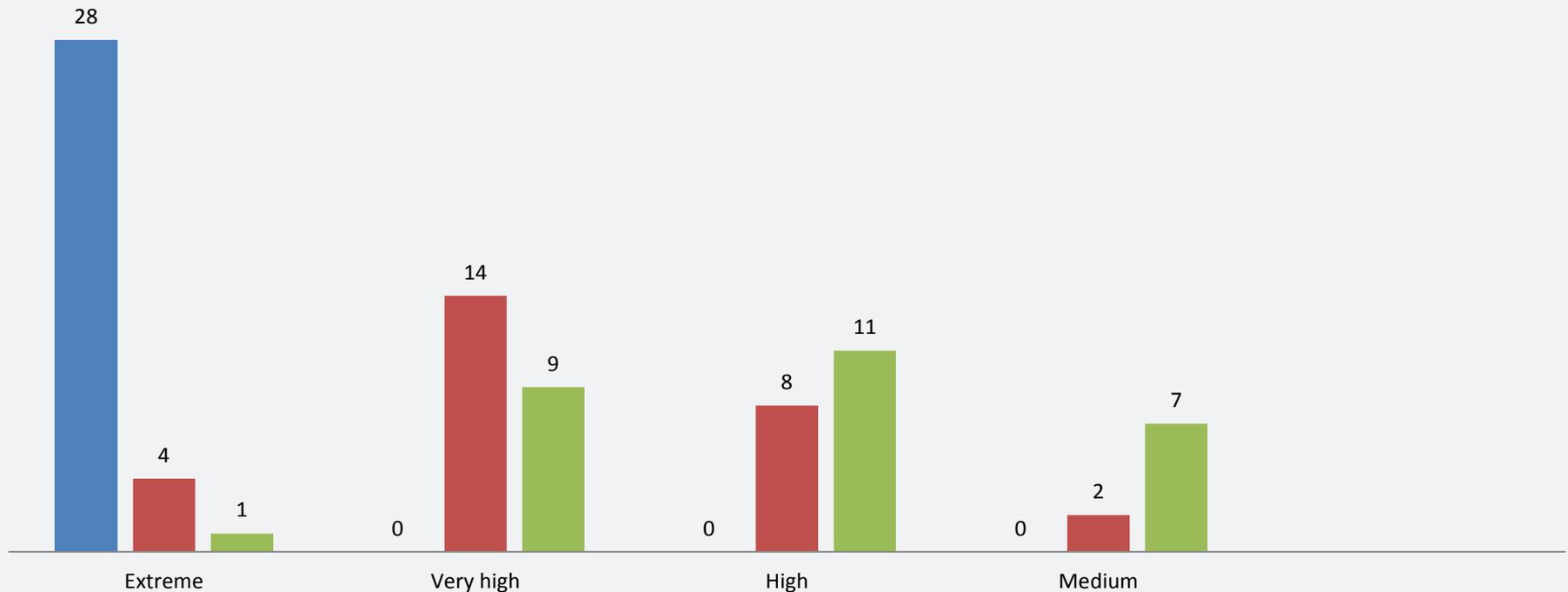
MOUNT WILSON RESPONSES

Mount Wilson

■ RFS Rate the Bushfire Risk

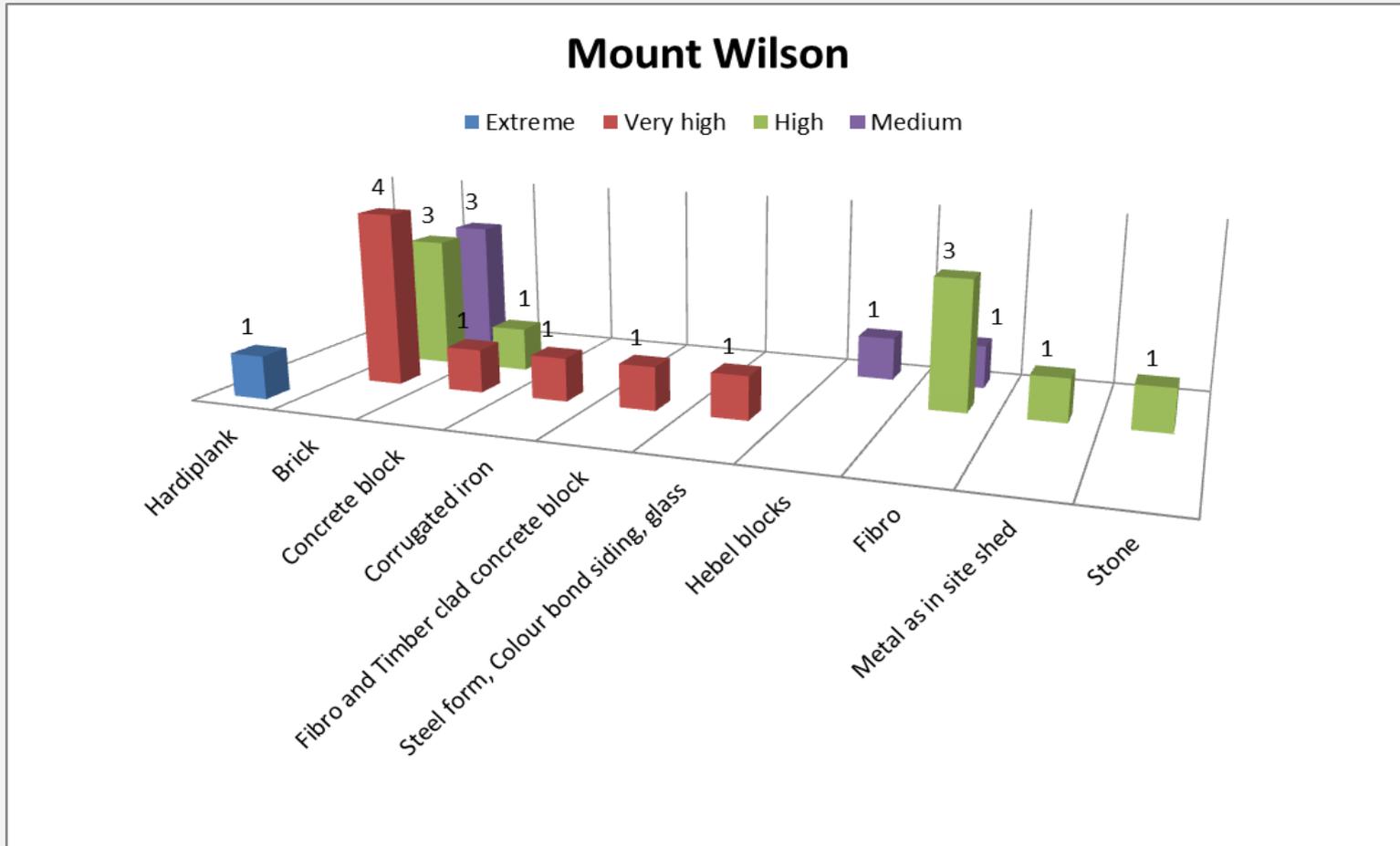
■ Residents Rate the Bushfire Risk, Question 6: How do you rate the risk of bushfire in this locality?

■ Residents Rate the Bushfire Risk for their homes, Question 13: How do you rate the risk of bushfire to your current home



MOUNT WILSON

WALL CONSTRUCTION AND RISK



Factors in the surrounding area (18 out of 28)

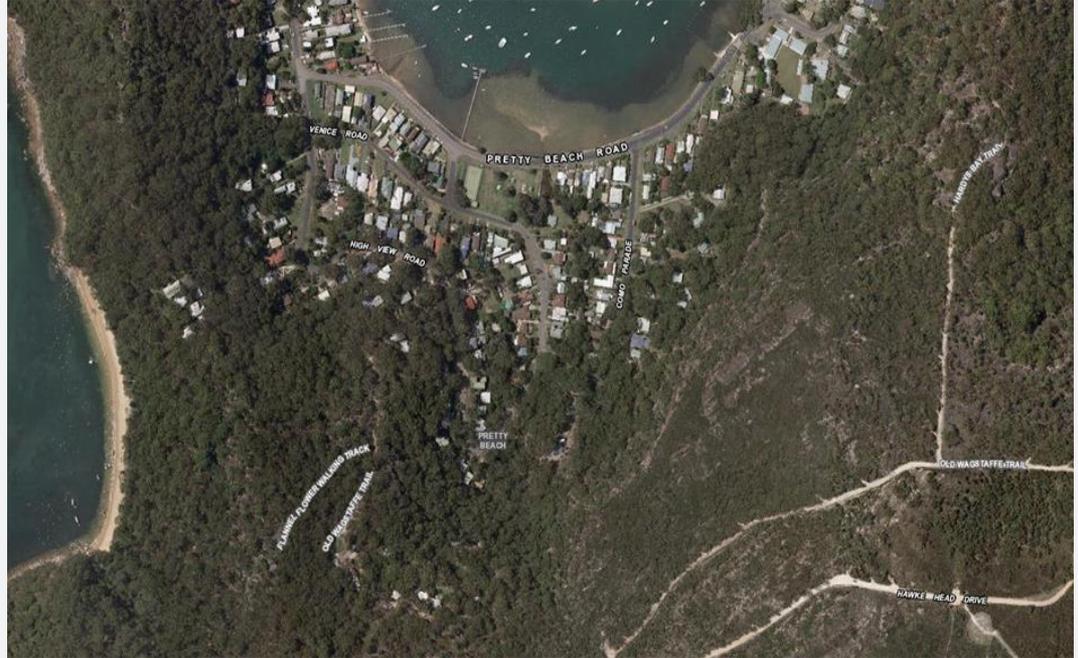
- Lack of a hazard reduction for years
- Proximity to the National Park
- Bushland
- Steep slopes
- Closeness of trees to their homes
- Anticipated fire threat direction

Their bushfire preparation activities (7 out of 28)

- Regularly mown grass
- Cleared areas around house
- No overhanging trees
- Sprinklers with access to water tanks and generators

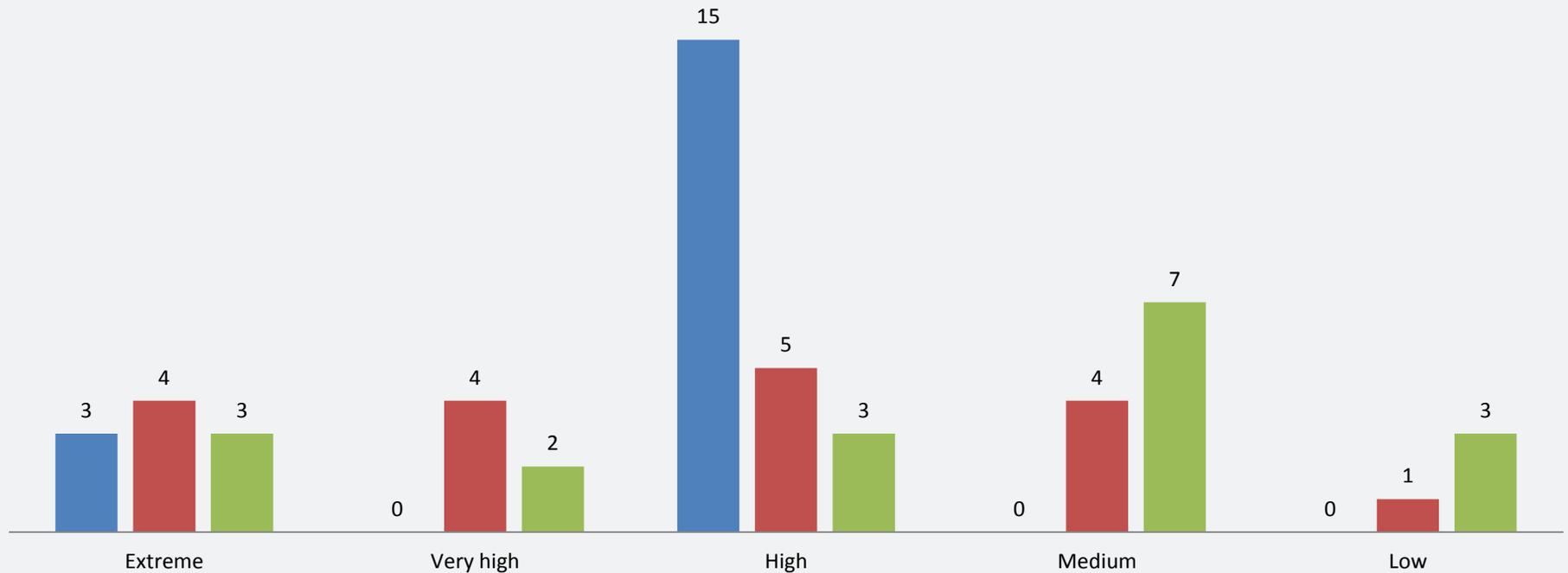
Construction of their house (3 out of 28)

PRETTY BEACH



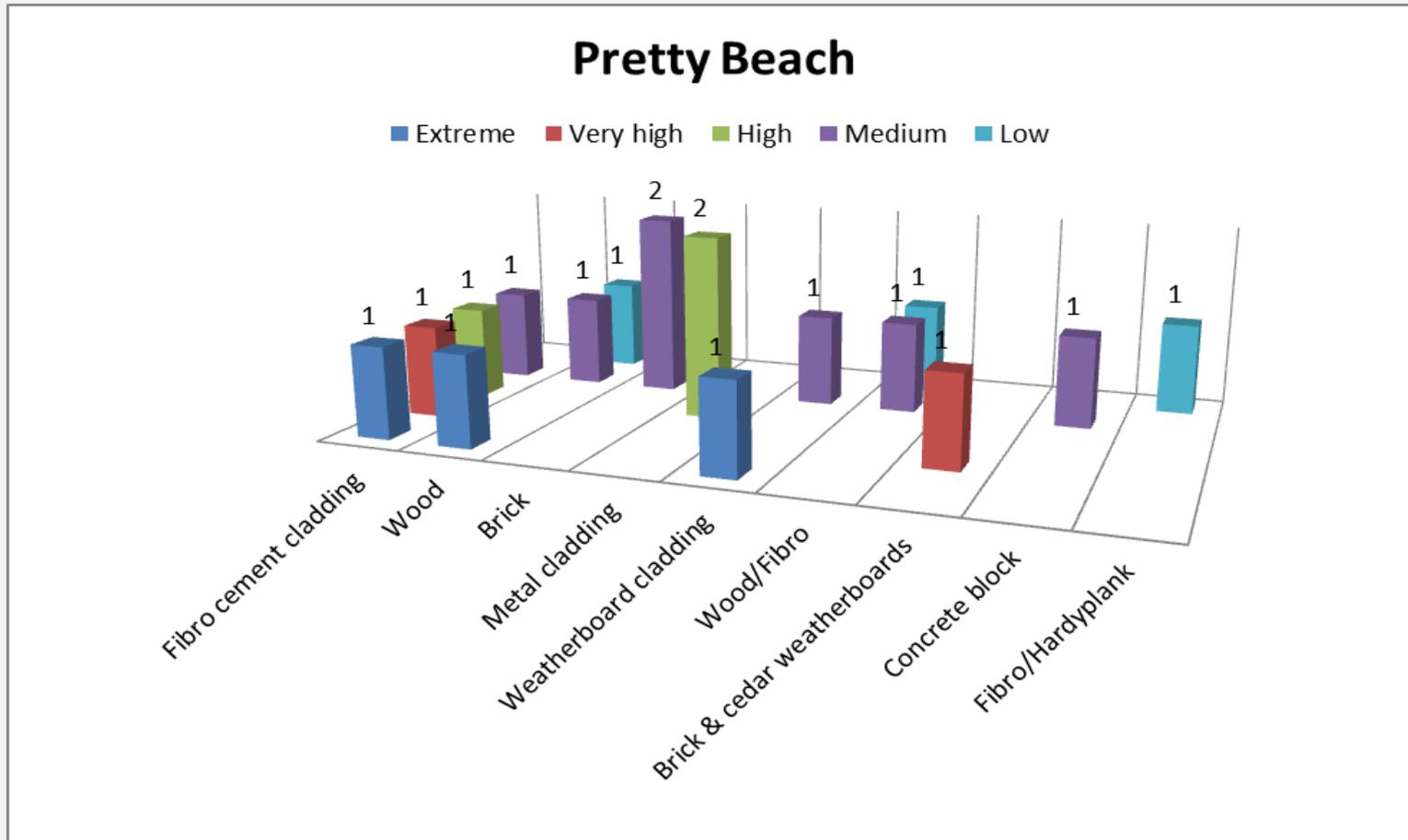
Pretty Beach

- RFS Rate the Bushfire Risk
- Residents Rate the Bushfire Risk, Question 6: How do you rate the risk of bushfire in this locality?
- Residents Rate the Bushfire Risk for their homes, Question 13: How do you rate the risk of bushfire to your current home?



PRETTY BEACH

WALL CONSTRUCTION AND RISK



PRETTY BEACH

RESIDENTS PERCEPTION OF THE BUSHFIRE RISK OF THEIR OWN PROPERTY

Recent bushfire (7 out of 18)

- Not being damaged by it
- Almost being damaged by it

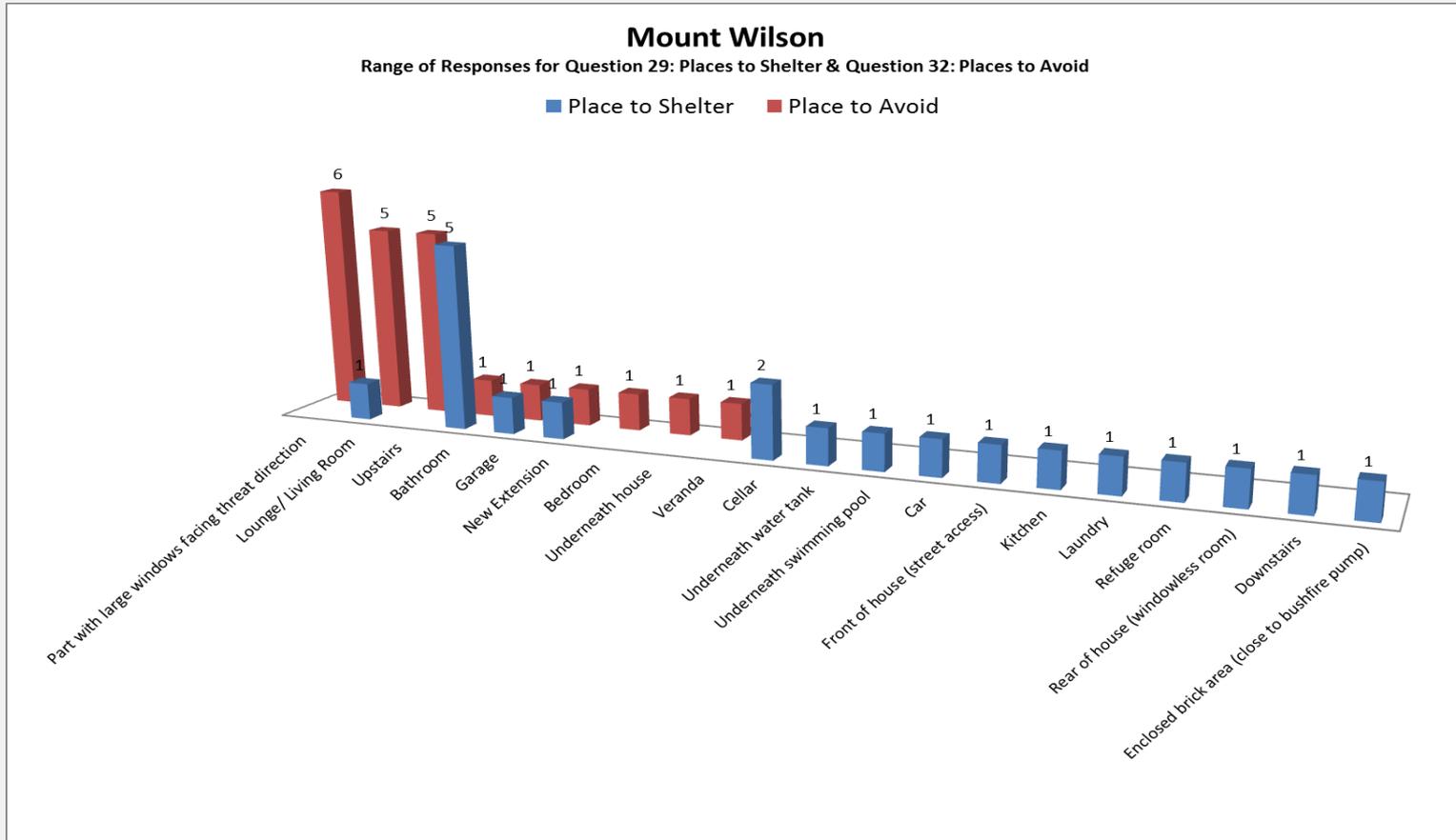
Factors in the surrounding area (6 out of 18)

- Proximity to the National Park
- Bushland
- Steep slopes
- Neglect of maintenance by neighbours

Construction of their house (2 out of 18)

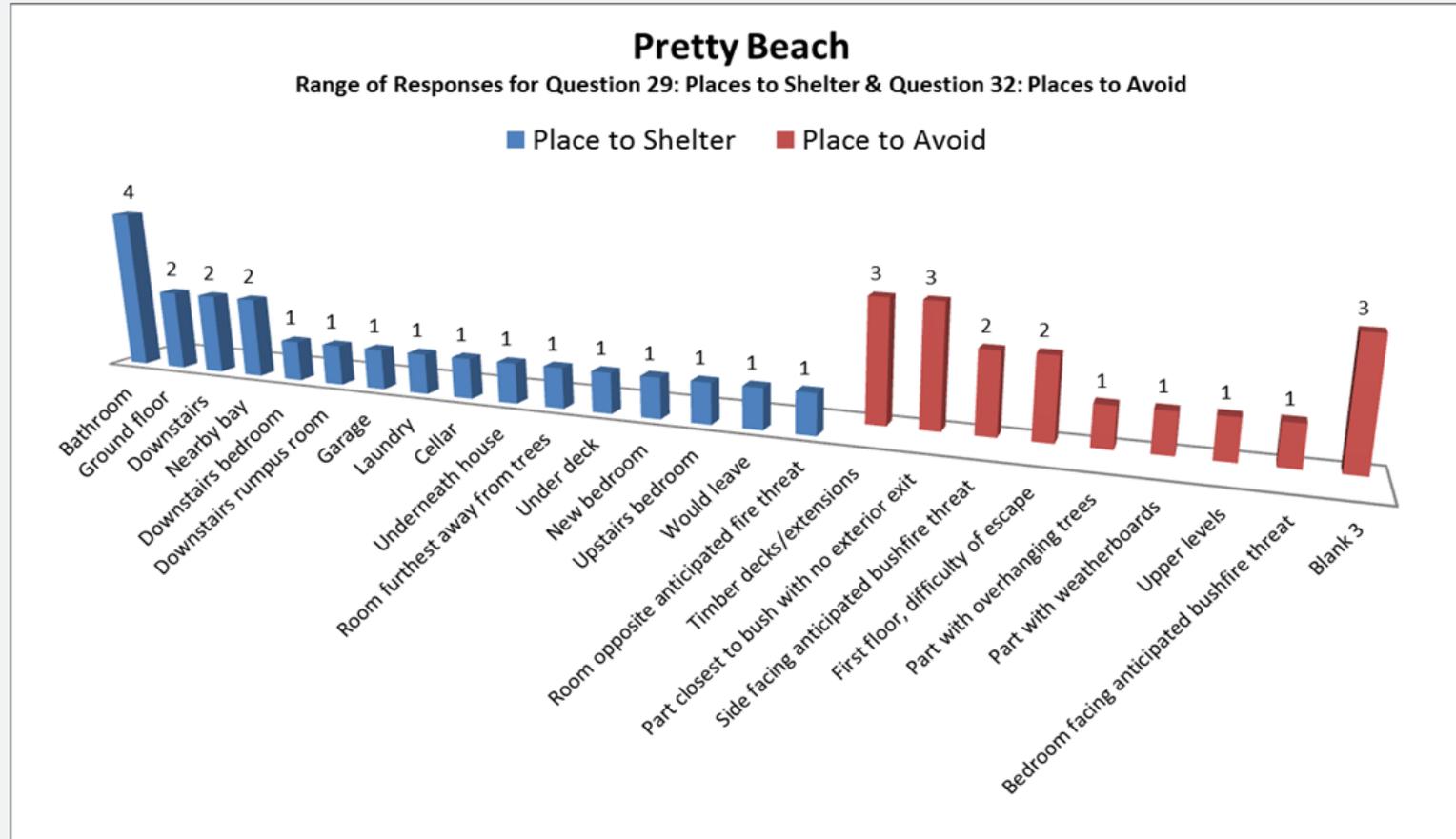
MOUNT WILSON

RANGE OF RESPONSES FOR 'PLACES TO SHELTER' & 'PLACES TO AVOID'



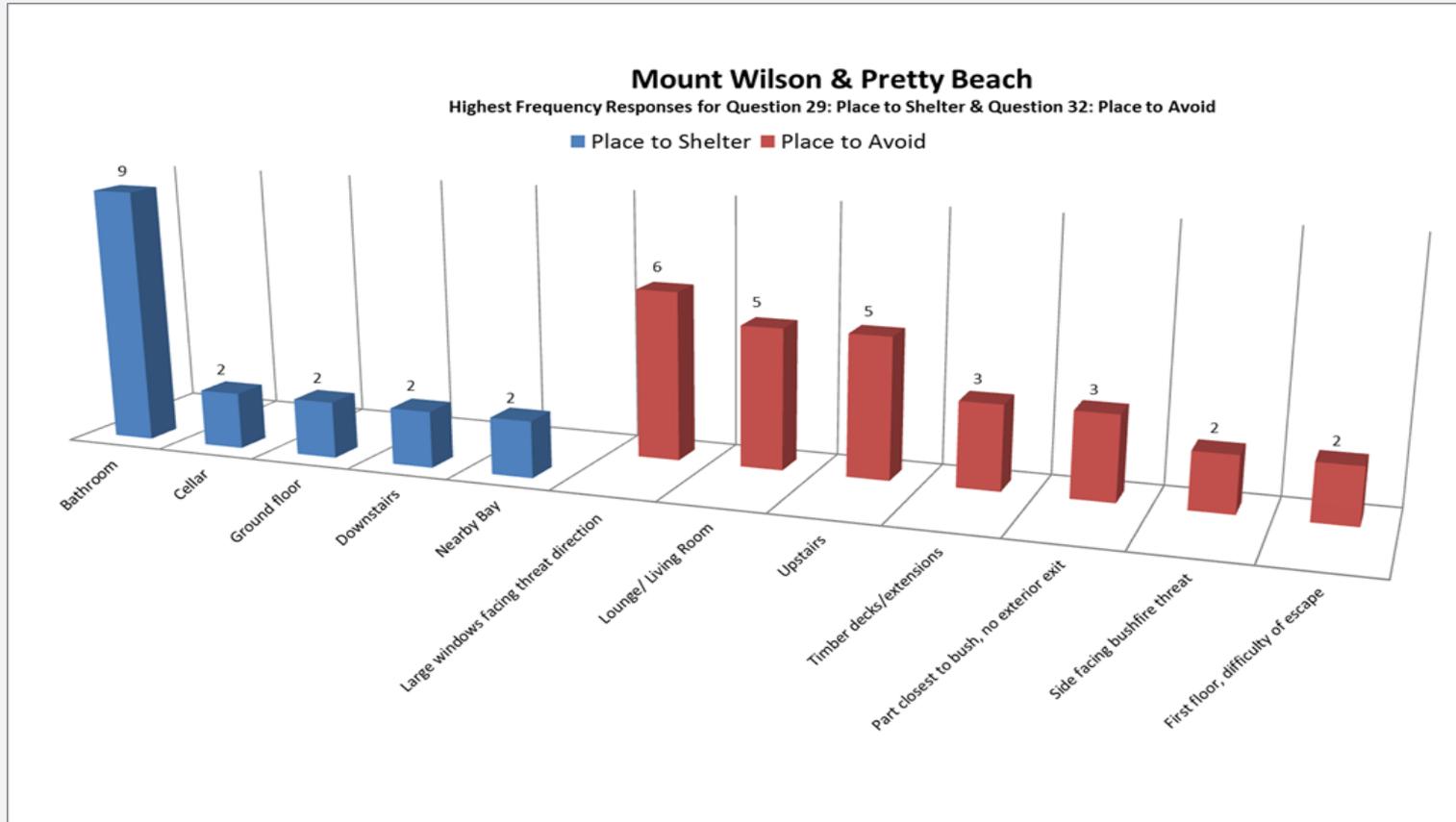
PRETTY BEACH

RANGE OF RESPONSES FOR 'PLACES TO SHELTER' & 'PLACES TO AVOID'



MOUNT WILSON & PRETTY BEACH

HIGHEST FREQUENCY RESPONSES FOR 'PLACES TO SHELTER' / 'PLACES TO AVOID'



WHICH PARTS OF THEIR HOMES WOULD RESIDENTS SEEK SHELTER IN DURING A BUSHFIRE AND WHICH PARTS WOULD THEY AVOID

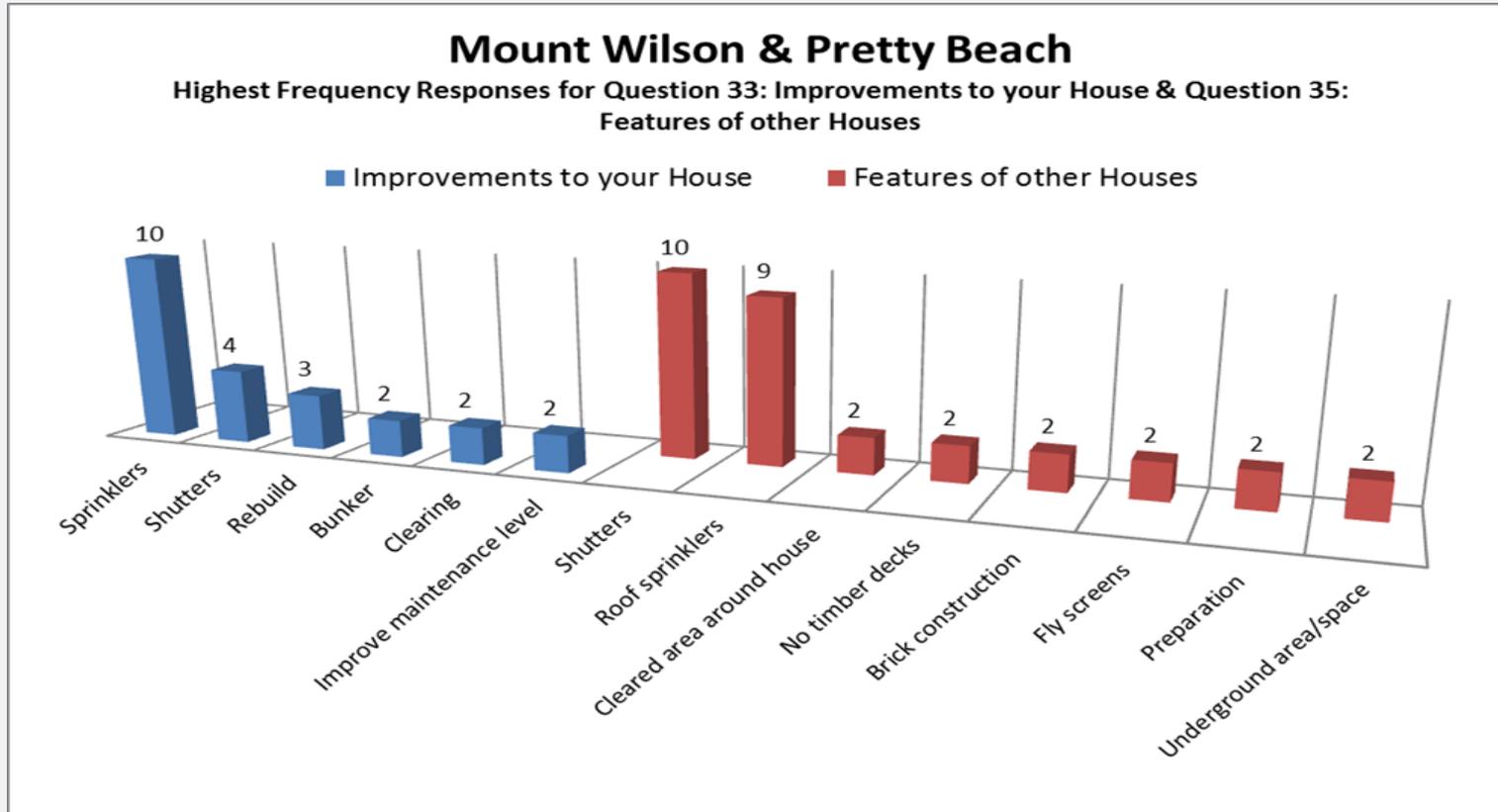
For **Place to Shelter** the bathroom (9 out of 46) was the most popular choice. While there was a focus on the ground floor to facilitate escape.

Place to Avoid responses fall into four categories:

- Spaces with large amounts of glass facing fire threat (6 out of 46)
- Lounge/Living room (5 out of 46)
- Upstairs (limited escape) (5 out of 46)
- Parts/sections closest to the direction of the anticipated bushfire threat (5 out of 46)

MOUNT WILSON & PRETTY BEACH

IMPROVEMENTS TO YOUR HOUSE / FEATURES OF OTHER HOUSES



WHAT IMPROVEMENTS/FEATURES OF OTHER HOUSES DO RESIDENTS BELIEVE MIGHT IMPROVE THE ABILITY OF THEIR HOME TO RESPOND TO THE LOCAL BUSHFIRE RISK?

While a range of suggestions were given, there were primarily two architectural improvements to their homes that residents of Mount Wilson & Pretty Beach favoured.

They were:

- Roof and other sprinkler systems (19 out of 46)
- Bushfire shutters (14 out of 46)

FINDINGS / CONCLUSIONS

1. Residents overwhelmingly give their area a lower bushfire risk rating than the NSW RFS.
2. For their homes they either matched the risk rating they had allocated to their local area or gave it a lowest ranking.
3. There is no difference between the way that residents living in newer homes attributed the risk to their homes and those living in older homes.
4. Previous experience of a bushfire did not significantly affect the way residents allocated the risk rating to their homes.
5. It was generally not the materials used in the construction of their homes that residents used to ascertain the bushfire risk of their home; rather it appeared to be factors in the surrounding area.
6. There were commonalities in the spaces residents suggested they would take shelter and avoid in their own house during a bushfire.

1. This research gives a clearer indication of the gap (after a CPP Open Day and a recent bushfire) between the bushfire risk ratings of the NSW RFS and residents of Mount Wilson and Pretty Beach, NSW.
2. Because residents often plan to shelter in bathrooms during a bushfire, new building construction may need to take greater care in the design and placement of bathrooms and ensuites in homes built in bushfire prone areas.
3. As residents living in AS 3959 compliant homes do not feel safer, it may appear to them that there is little justification in the additional expense this compliance costs.
4. If money became available for improving the bushfire performance of existing (non AS3959 compliant) buildings in bushfire prone areas, the following innovations are more likely to be viewed as valid by residents of those areas: roof and other sprinkler systems; bushfire shutters. These would need to be verified as viable bushfire prevention measures.

QUESTIONS



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