

# MEDIA STATEMENT



Wednesday, 7 June 2017

## **SES callouts prompt push for residents to be prepared**

Winter weather is yet to set in but already the Bunbury State Emergency Service has attended seven callouts to properties during recent rain events that could have been prevented.

The need to help homeowners because of leaking roofs and blocked gutters has prompted a call from the SES for residents to make the most of unseasonal fine weather and storm-proof their homes before the inevitable wet and windy conditions are here to stay.

Bunbury SES Manager Chris Widmer said property owners and residents could carry out simple preventative maintenance that would reduce the likelihood of damage in a storm event.

“Carrying out small tasks now can have a big impact when the weather turns bad,” Mr Widmer said.

“The SES wants to ensure it is able to respond in a timely manner to more serious – even life-threatening – emergencies. Your attention to home maintenance and basic winter preparedness can safeguard against SES crews having to attend your property for an incident that could have been prevented by routine upkeep.

“Bunbury has a population of more than 33,000 but only 54 SES volunteers, so in times of emergencies it is the most in need who will be the priority.”

Key areas that require attention around the home include:

- Roof – Regularly check your roof for broken or missing tiles, or in the case of Colorbond-style roofing, check that your roof is properly secured. Repair any damage.
- Gutters and downpipes – Clean out gutters and downpipes at least twice a year. This prevents water overflowing into verandas, eaves and ceilings. A ceiling will not hold the 30 tonnes of water that blocked gutters can push inside your home.
- Boats, caravans, trampolines, outdoor settings – Due to their lightweight construction, these items are particularly susceptible to becoming airborne in winds during storms. When storms are forecast, or when the items are not in use, store them away or secure them by tying them down.
- Trees – Trim branches overhanging or near your home and hire a contractor to clear trees from powerlines.

Mr Widmer said being prepared for emergencies was also important and residents should have a plan to guide the family’s reactions for short-term survival. The U-4-72 program and ownership of an emergency ready kit that is available from the City of Bunbury are a great place to start.

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“These kits are designed to help you get through 72 hours and contain everything from a wind-up torch/radio to water containers,” Mr Widmer said.

Bunbury SES has been serving the community for more than 54 years and in 2016 the unit responded to hundreds of incidents, with volunteers contributing more than 7000 hours of their time.

If you require SES emergency assistance, call 132 500. However, half an hour spent cleaning your gutters and always heeding Bureau of Meteorology warnings could prevent the need to make such a call.

**ENDS**

Jamie Tatham, Communications Officer

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