

Why be  
anywhere  
else?



A very ominous smoky evening sky to end the year in Wingello

## A Smoky New Year

*New Year's Eve gave Wingello a small preview of what we can expect if the fires come here.*

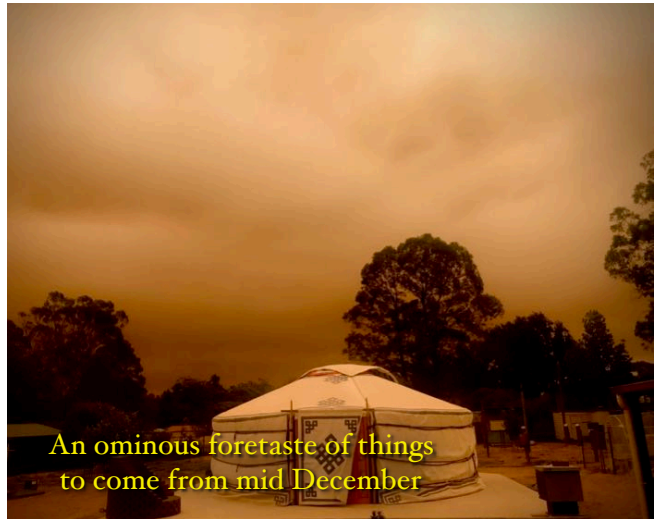
Bushfires have been ravaging across the country since September 2019. Currently the area burnt is an equivalent area to the whole of Belgium. And the fires continue to grow, devastating homes and towns, and endangering lives.

The Fire authorities have been warning us for well over the last five years that we were in for a devastating fire season. A fire needs three elements - fuel, heat and oxygen.

Australian Eucalyptus trees are designed to thrive in fire prone areas. Every year they don't burn they drop more kindling in the form of branches, twigs and leaves all beautifully dried ready for instant burning. The drought has also dried out the ground so there is very little moisture and the gum trees drop excess limbs to conserve the water they do get. So, country wide we have a huge load of fuel ready to burn. Australian summers are famously hot and we love that about our country. Unfortunately this year's fire season has had two additional really dangerous elements - lightning strikes onto really dry areas and arsonists - either malicious or oblivious.

For Wingello, we have traditionally had devastating fires come at us from the West, pushed by a hot wind racing across from the Hume Highway in less than 10 minutes. Everyone here has planned around this. In early December we saw that the Currowan fire had started south of us. "No worries," we all thought, "That won't affect us."

Then there was a strong Southerly wind and the fire suddenly doubled in size, out of control in dense hilly bushland. It continued to slowly grow with the Eastern and Southern edges causing serious damage to coastal areas.



An ominous foretaste of things to come from mid December

Suddenly we found ourselves facing a fire threat from the South, pushed by a Southerly wind possibly pushing fire across the immense Shoalhaven Gorge straight to us!

On New Year's Eve we watched as the sky went from clear blue to grey to dense brown smoky soup in seconds. Over half the village had left before this. Once the smoke hit it was too late to safely leave for everyone else.

For now, the flames haven't jumped the Gorge so we should consider this a relatively mild foretaste of what may happen in coming days.

**Stay Alert. Monitor the situation. Consult your Fire Plan.**

Fire season Started  
**1 September**  
No open fires  
without a permit.

**Library Bus**  
Tuesdays 2:15 to 3:15  
In front of the park  
Jan 7, 21 Feb

Bin Collection	
Mondays	
January	
6	Green
13	Yellow
20	Green
27	Yellow

Store Opening Hours	
Phone: 02 4884 4340	
Mon - Fri:	7:30 am - 6:00 pm
Weekends:	8:00am - 3:00pm
Public holidays:	8:00am - 10:30am
We are open <b>Every Day</b> except Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Christmas & Boxing Day.	

## Wingello Community News

The annual Santa Lolly Run where the Wingello Fire Brigade escorts Santa Claus throughout the town giving lollies to all the children was changed. The Furies had been fighting fires in Blaxland and Balmoral and elsewhere for weeks, so Santa came to the park and the children came to him.

Santa did a great job with all the village children who were able to have fun in the playground equipment while they waited their turn.

Then it was a simple matter of popping in to the hall for the Christmas Carols. We always enjoy Christmas Carols when everyone can join in, regardless of individual singing talents. Enthusiasm and volume make up any difference.



### How are the Volunteer Rural Fire Brigades funded?

Each Australian State funds their own fire services, so NSW is responsible for funding the NSW Rural Fire Service (RFS), which in turn funds the individual brigades. All brigades are provided with trucks, equipment and uniforms all compliant with Australian safety and quality standards. The needs and capabilities of each brigade are taken into account in determining what is provided.

The equipment provided by the NSW RFS is good quality gear and complies with all standards, but individual brigades often also raise their own funds to supplement their equipment with items that exceed the standards. For example, the Wingello brigade has made the decision to use higher end Kevlar fire helmets to provide additional safety when fighting fire

up close amid falling branches and so on. The same applies for other equipment such as smoke masks, improved radios, high quality compact battery operated LED incident scene lighting and more.

The members of the brigade are volunteers. In Wingello they have training sessions every Wednesday nights. Volunteers can help in many ways and do not have to attend fires or motor vehicle accidents if they are not comfortable doing so.

If you wish to support your local furies, you can do so at the NSW RFS at <https://www.rfs.nsw.gov.au/volunteer/support-your-local-brigade>. You can select your local brigade on this page and that will be applied to them.

Alternatively, you can donate directly to the brigade in person in their donations hat, leaving it in an envelope for us to pass on or contact them for direct deposit details.

Wingello Rain Chart									
Month	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
	Mth	Mth	Mth	Mth	Mth	Mth	Mth	Mth	Mth
Jan	45	64	87	27	205	142	34	61	52
Feb	129	304	320	112	73	40	96	142	22
Mar	70	160	27	192	34	52	227	45	103
Apr	63	62	68	44	166	19	44	36	12
May	84	15	47	32	52	36	21	18	12
Jun	84	80	310	56	58	337	50	37	69
Jul	39	25	18	9	51	60	20	6	12
Aug	67	13	2	290	196	57	30	29	23
Sep	53	23	65	31	39	61	-	28	59
Oct	81	26	25	78	56	36	61	75	18
Nov	75	60	84	46	48	47	98	109	16
Dec	47	32	37	263	33	63	43	101	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>836</b>	<b>862</b>	<b>1,087</b>	<b>1,178</b>	<b>1,008</b>	<b>949</b>	<b>720</b>	<b>685</b>	<b>397</b>