



The Miracle of Wingello

4 January was a new page in Wingello's history and we're all here to talk about it.

On Saturday 4 January 2020 a new chapter in the history of Wingello was written. Like so many in NSW we were faced with the immediate threat of bushfire from the nearby Currowan Fire just over the Shoalhaven Gorge. All predictions based on what normally happens was for the fire to perhaps leap across the gorge and then via ember attacks make its way towards Wingello, Penrose, Tallong and Bundanoon.

But the fire had its own brand new attack method. The fire created its own weather pattern, a Pyrocumulonimbus cloud which was well known. But this time the southerly change hit it and the rare combination of factors collapsed the cloud and created something like a vacuum which sucked the fire from across the gorge to directly behind Wingello and Bundanoon giving us full force fire with 80km winds.

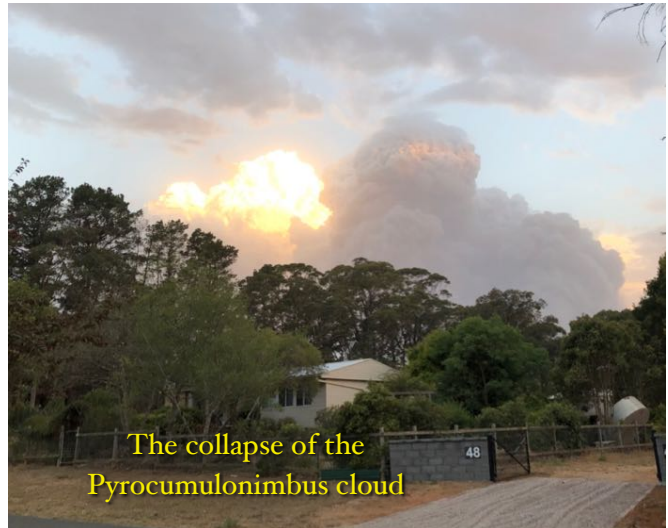
Instead of the expected ember attack and slow-ish fire that would arrive by Sunday, we had the forest in full hot blaze a very short distance from the Eastern edge of the village. Upon seeing the red sky and hearing the loud sound of a roaring furnace, similar to a massive freight train we retreated from our home and went to make a stand at the Village Store. Our neighbours and many other neighbourhood teams and individuals remained. The RFS had no choice but to fall back and defend the only defensive position of the railway line.

(Imagine Gandalf in Lord of the Rings, 'You shall not pass!')

The fire reached the Store a short time later and with embers falling like a bright red shower we saw flames nearby twice as high as the shed as \$70,000 worth of building materials went up in flames. We realised that with that level of fire we could not defend a 100 year old wooden building with solar panels and lots of nooks and crannies. We soaked everything down as much as we could and evacuated to in front of the Fire Shed. It was unwise to go straight out via the unmaintained fire trap of Murrimba Road unless we knew it was safe.

While we waited for word about Murrimba Road we saw houses on our street exploding in fire and the RFS working like crazy stopping attacks in all directions. We escaped at midnight to an apocalyptic scene of much of the village on fire and so many Firies battling the enemy with untold bravery and conviction.

At the break of day, after a crazy night defending the village, we all discovered that a seeming miracle had



occurred. The ferocity of the fire had been held at the railway line with only a couple of crossings. The Eastern side of the village had lost around a dozen homes and a great many had lost everything except for the house.

Based on the speed and intensity of the fire all fully expected to have lost over 50 homes and if the fire had made it past the railway line, over 80 houses would have gone.

Our firies, all those that rushed in from near and far and the brave locals who prepared and fought their own individual fights for theirs and their neighbour's homes can all be proud of their achievements.

Wingello is here.

All those that make Wingello great - our villagers - are all alive.

Together we will rebuild with the same resilience that makes Wingello such a great place to call home.

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

Library Bus
Tuesdays 2:15 to 3:15
In front of the park
Feb 4, 18 March 3, 17

Bin Collection
Mondays

February

3	● Yellow
10	● Green
17	● Yellow
24	● Green

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 **Every Day** except Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Christmas & Boxing Day.

Wingello Community News

Community Meeting Saturday 22 February

A Community Meeting will be held on Saturday 22 February at 3pm at the Wingello Hall by the Wingello Village Association. The emphasis of the meeting will be Community Resilience.

Speakers will include representative of Wingello RFB, and Michael Brearley, Infrastructure spokesperson for the WVA and also president of the Wingello RFB. Carol Olde will speak on behalf of the WVA.

Ample time will be allocated for questions from the floor.

Come and have your say in the future of our village.

As the meeting is in the early stages of planning further information will be available closer to the date. Please watch notice boards and WVA Facebook page for updates.

Regular Craft Group Saturday 8 February

The monthly Craft Group will meet on Saturday 8th February at 2pm in the Wingello School Library. All welcome to join the group with your current craft work or simply for the company and a friendly cup of tea. \$5 donation is appreciated. For inquiries please contact secretary.wva@gmail.com.

Fire Relief Fund

We have created our own Wingello Fire Relief Fund. We know that much of the millions raised will not make it down here. Even our council needs to be pushed to provide assistance.

The purpose of the fund is to assist with the privation caused by the gap between what is covered by insurance and what is needed. As at the end of January we have been donated almost \$8,000 so far. It's not much

but we will manage it and there are no administration fees and the funds will go directly to Wingello residents.

More details can be found here:

<https://wingello.blogspot.com/2020/01/wingello-fire-relief-fund.html>

You can EFT funds to: BDCU,

BSB: 802-101, Acc: 100077285,

Name: Wingello Fire Relief Fund

Wingello Fire Brigade News

Due to the horrific fire season Australia has been experiencing, we missed out on the opportunity to wish you all a Merry Christmas, Happy New Year, and a happy Australia Day. We hope you have had the chance throughout the summer holidays to relax and spend time with your families. As you are all aware, this fire season has been an extremely challenging and difficult time for our firefighters and their families for many reasons. The majority of volunteers have been on the fire line since August and as such are exhausted. We are extremely grateful the dedication of our community members who have supported us throughout the season with donations of food and drinks, those who have donated their time to cook for us or clean the station and undertake any seemingly minor task that has lifted the weight from our shoulders over the past few months. It has been difficult for all of Wingello and surrounding villages so to see everyone come together in support of the community despite their own individual losses has been incredible. The season is far from over so the continued support is needed and appreciated by all.

We would also like to acknowledge the incredible acts of service given by those who answered the call and never returned home. The bravery and dedication of the firefighters, aircrewman, and pilots will never be forgotten.

With the forecasted weather conditions set to deteriorate this weekend, we ask you to remain vigilant and prepared should the surrounding fires escalate. While we understand that it can be frustrating at times trying to get the most up-to-date and accurate information regarding road closures and fire situations, please understand that we are all volunteers working tirelessly in difficult conditions and are simply unable to respond to all your enquiries straight away. For updated information please monitor the NSW RFS website, Fires Near Me, the RFS Southern Highlands Facebook Page, local radio stations, the Bush Fire Information Line 1800 679 737, and Live Traffic and remember to follow your fire plan.

