

# Implementing a new, nationally consistent Fire Danger Rating system.

From 1 September 2022, Australia's Fire Danger Rating System will be improved and simplified, to make it easier for you to make decisions to stay safe on days of fire danger risk.

The move to a simpler system is backed by improvements in science, which will mean we can better predict areas of greater risk on days of fire danger.

Across the country fire and emergency services are applying nationally consistent colours, signs and terminology. This means that wherever you go in Australia, and whatever the season or fuels you're surrounded with, you can understand the level of threat and what you need to do to stay safe.

The new ratings are:



**Moderate**  
Plan and prepare

**High**  
Be ready to act

**Extreme**  
Take action now to protect life and property

**Catastrophic**  
For your survival, leave bushfire risk areas

## Benefits

The Australian Fire Danger Rating System (AFDRS) Program is redesigning the forecasting of fire by:

- Improving the scientific accuracy behind fire danger predictions.
- Improving the way that fire danger is communicated.
- Providing government and industry with better decision-making tools.
- Reducing the costs associated with bushfire impacts.

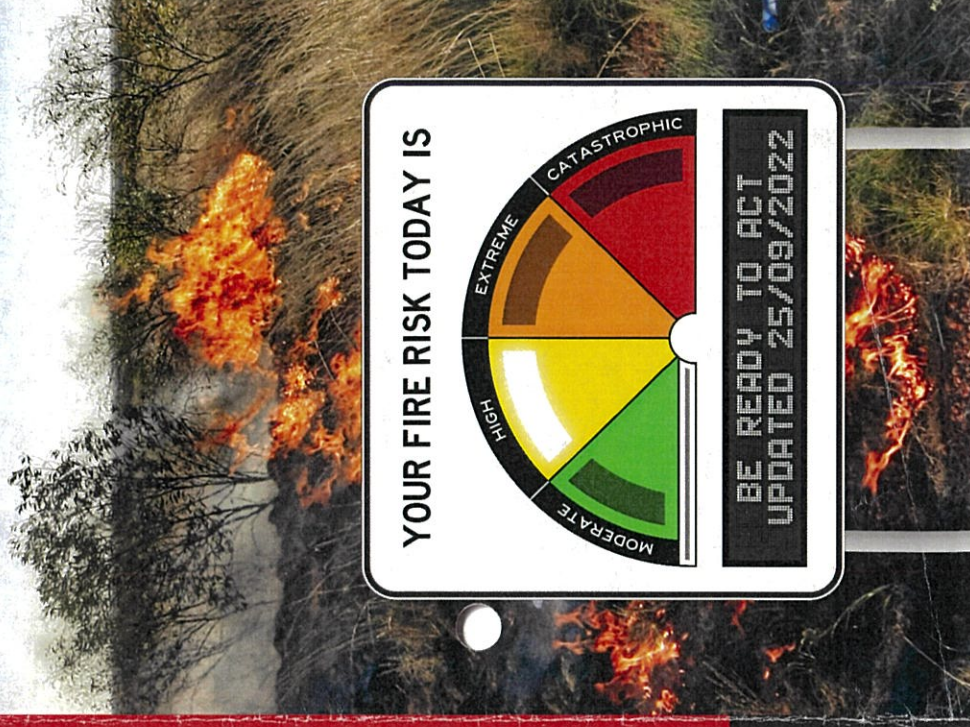
The key benefit is a more prepared and resilient community resulting in a reduction in loss of life, property, and human harm.

The AFDRS calculates fire danger at a finer geographic scale than ever before so more specific and relevant information can be provided.

Significant cost savings are expected due to improved fire danger information leading to better decisions and more appropriate and timely action. It will also improve cross-border operations and support sharing of firefighting resources.

For more information visit  
[afac.com.au/initiative/afdrs](http://afac.com.au/initiative/afdrs)  
or email [AFDRS@dfes.wa.gov.au](mailto:AFDRS@dfes.wa.gov.au)

# Australia's Fire Danger Rating System is Changing.



HOW FIREPROOF IS YOUR PLAN?



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# Changing the science

The current Fire Danger Rating System is largely based on science that is more than 60 years old. New technology and research have greatly improved our ability to accurately predict fire behaviour and the potential threat to the community.

The AFDRS uses the latest scientific understanding about weather, fuel and how fire behaves in different types of vegetation to improve the reliability of fire danger forecasts. This strengthens the ability of those working in emergency services to be better prepared, make improved decisions, and provide better advice to the community.

The Fire Danger Rating System is designed to be updatable so that the system can take advantage of improving science, data and information into the future.

By better understanding fuel types and fire behaviour on any given day of fire risk, agencies will be in a stronger position to respond to fires, adopting specific firefighting suppression strategies.

## ➤ What are fire danger ratings?

Fire danger ratings describe the potential level of danger should a bushfire start and are calculated using a combination of weather forecasting and information about vegetation that could fuel a fire.

## ➤ Why are we reducing the number of ratings?

Extensive social research found that most people in bushfire risk areas don't understand the current system. There were calls for a simpler, action-oriented system.

## ➤ But with more days and prolonged fire seasons shouldn't we be getting more information?

The science that sits behind Fire Danger Rating modelling is being improved. A better understanding of how different fuel types burn and improvements in technology means we can more accurately predict the risk faced by communities on any given day.

## ➤ But I work in an industry that requires more specific fire danger information?

Industries and members of the community who need more information will be able to access the Fire Behaviour Index, which will give a more in-depth level of detail about the fire danger.

## ➤ The new system doesn't look that different to the old system, so why bother changing it at all?

Community research found that most people were familiar with the old system, it just seemed too technical and irrelevant for them. We have made significant changes to how we calculate fire danger risk, so that the ratings and information provided to the community is more accurate.

## ➤ Who is responsible for these changes?

The AFDRS is being coordinated by NSW RFS and AFAC (the National Council for Fire and Emergency Services), with support from the Bureau of Meteorology. A National Program Board, with representation from each of the State and Territories' fire agencies are overseeing the program, which is being delivered by local implementation teams.

Photo: FA

