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**Be prepared:** There was plenty of interest in last year's Bushfire Building Expo.

## Bushfire answers

Residents from the Blue Mountains and beyond are expected to gather in large numbers for the much-anticipated Bushfire Building Expo and Community Forum this Saturday, September 19 at the Blue Mountains Theatre and Community Hub in Springwood.

The expo is a showcase of more than 40 exhibitors of leading technology, products and professional services necessary to build in a bushfire prone area, including building products, bushfire consultants, architects, builders, landscapers, designers and insurers.

Presented by Blue Mountains Economic Enterprise (BMEE), it includes free community information sessions, presenting essential information for all residents living in bushfire-prone areas.

Topics include: surviving a bushfire, bushland management, risk and resilience, explaining a BAL (Bushfire Attack Level), insurance and retrofitting in bushfire zones.

Jacqueline Brinkman, the Blue Mountains Economic Enterprise CEO, said more than 750 people attended the first Bushfire Building Expo held last year.

"There was strong demand to hold a similar event in the lead-up to the 2015 bushfire risk season and we hope the community enjoys the day and benefits from the vast range of information on offer," Ms Brinkman said.

The Bushfire Building Conference and Expo is supported by the state and federal governments,

with major partners NSW Rural Fire Service and GIO Insurance.

GIO spokesman, Stephen Bell, said: "Insurance is one of the most critical financial decisions homeowners will make which is why we have partnered with the expo."

"We will be available to provide information to residents that will help them to make more informed decisions when it comes to choosing appropriate levels of cover and ensure they are getting the best possible protection from their insurance."

The NSW Rural Fire Service will have information regarding bushfire BAL ratings and how to prepare. Fire trucks and a free barbecue promise to be a big hit for families.

NSW RFS Deputy Commissioner Rob Rogers urged residents to understand the fire risk and how to best prepare. "Research conducted following the October 2013 Blue Mountains bushfires found that while people living in bushfire-prone areas have a general understanding that their area is at risk, many don't act on that risk," he said.

"A well-constructed and well-prepared property can make a significant difference to the safety of you and your family should a fire impact on your home, however it is equally as important that everyone has a plan of what to do in the event of a fire."

The expo is open from 9am to 5pm. The free information sessions will be repeated throughout the day. For the full program and further information, visit: [www.bmee.org.au](http://www.bmee.org.au).