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RESILIENCE IN ACTION

Tips and tricks for a bushfire-smart community

Edward Hunter Reserve, Moe/Moe South

Current CFA works in Moe South

John Crane, Vegetation Management Officer, CFA

The Country Fire Authority vegetation management program has been working in conjunction with the Latrobe City Council and the community to deliver bushfire prevention works across the Moe South community.

A considerable effort has been undertaken to assess the bushfire risk to the community and undertake bushfire prevention and vegetation management that delivers measurable outcomes for families and their homes.

Edward Hunter Reserve has been one area where the Council and CFA have worked collaboratively to lower the bushfire risk. As the reserve is situated at the base of a slope with several hundred homes and privately owned vegetation above it, the Reserve is a particularly high priority for bushfire prevention. It has also had minimal fire history or bushfire prevention works undertaken in the area for many years.

To better provide proactive bushfire prevention in the reserve, CFA sought and secured funding via the Victorian government Safer Together program enabling highly valuable works to proceed.

As a result, the Latrobe City have been able to implement many of the bushfire prevention recommendations stated in the Reserve management plan, resulting in real and obvious fire management improvements in the area.

In recent times CFA and the Council have delivered over $66,000 of on ground bushfire mitigation works within the reserve.
These works include ecological values assessment, creation of an "Asset Protection Zone" adjacent to Bormann's Street, improved fire fighter and community safety in the reserve by assessing and treating hazardous or "Killer" trees, track works providing CFA and FRV brigades access deep into the reserve in order to directly attack any fires within the reserve.

Two sites within the reserve have also been prepared for potential Fuel Reduction Burns providing both bushfire prevention and ecological benefits to the reserve when undertaken.

The CFA have also been involved in the Community Based Bushfire Management program (CBBM) with Moe South. It was my pleasure to be invited to meet online with community members and discuss bushfire, community and prevention with you. That workshop can be viewed anytime online through the Community Bushfire Connections site: bit.ly/MoeSth

CFA also supported the corresponding CBBM "Cup Day Weekend Clean Up" event by engaging a contractor to collect green waste free of charge. This was a further investment of $10,000 for the Moe South community.

Moving forward we will be developing a series of short videos including drone footage of the vegetation management works undertaken which will shared via the previously stated Moe South webpage.

We are also currently receiving nominations from CFA brigades for future fuel management works across the Latrobe valley which will inform our yearly planning and budget processes.

In summary we have invested a total of $77,500 of bushfire prevention related works across the Moe South community. We will be eagerly pursuing further funding to continue this valuable work within your community.

Cool burns on private property

Jenny Jackeulen & Luke van der Meulen, Moe South residents

On January 20, a group comprising local community members, the CFA and Latrobe City Council came to our property, 'Willyama', to further understand the impacts various types of vegetation can have in fire events and different methods of property preparedness.

Our property adjoins one of Gippsland Water's greenfield sites and is also close to Edward Hunter Bush Reserve. As custodians of this property, we are obliged to not only understand it better, but to share that learned knowledge with our community in the hope that we can all acquire better communal management practices. We are empowered to both mitigate future bush fires, but to also restore land back to a more natural balance.

At this property visit, we discussed possibly undertaking cool burns (mainly through candling) on our property in autumn 2022, in partnership with the CFA Vegetation Management team and the local brigade. This would be carried out for both educational and practical reasons. This service is also open to any community members. Contact your local brigade to find out more.

We see this as the beginning of learning and understanding; an opportunity for the community, CFA, Latrobe City Council and any other vested organisations to combine resources, knowledge and ideas to achieve a common goal – a better environment that is less prone to increasingly intense fire seasons.