

RESILIENCE IN ACTION

Tips and tricks for a bushfire-smart community

Spring is in the air

Rebekah Baynard-Smith, Community Based Bushfire Management Facilitator

With winter almost behind us, we can finally look forward to some warmer weather ahead... and so can our gardens.

Did you know? There are many different native and non-native tree species that are considered 'fire resistant' or 'fire retardant'. Of course nothing can be entirely fire proof but there are options to reduce the risk of fire and ember attack on your property by choosing certain species over others.

Things to think about might include:

- bark type
- how much leaf litter they produce
- flammability and oils
- the location and arrangement of plants (i.e. distance between other vegetation and infrastructure)

This **QR code** takes you to further information about what to plant and what to avoid.



To get a physical copy of the CFA's 'Landscaping for Bushfire' booklet, please text Rebekah at 0427 368 657

FIREWISE

Low Flammability. Best plants for your garden.

MODERATELY FIREWISE

OR

Moderate flammability. Regular maintenance needed.

AT-RISK FIREWISE

OR MORE

High flammability. Avoid use.

NOT FIREWISE

Extreme Flammability. Don't Plant.

Creature Feature: "Give me a home among the gum trees..."

By Darren Carman
(Delbridge Drive, Moe South)



Photo Credit: Patrick Kavanagh /Flickr

Though we might not get to see them all the time... maybe, just maybe... you will get to hear their barking come from the treetops at night and know who has come to visit...

One of the great things about living in Moe South is the native plants and animals we share our homes with. It can also at times pose a dilemma where these natural values conflict with our goals of protecting lives and property from the risk of bushfire. Not all things though have to be in black and white, but they can also be grey, just like a super cute **Sugar Glider!**

Many of us may be familiar and fortunate with seeing brushtail and ringtail possums at our properties, but Sugar Gliders can be much more elusive and often it is a case of them being heard and not seen. A few times I have been lucky enough to hear their boisterous 'yap, yap' at my place as a family of gliders pass through. Unfortunately, I have also found them during the day after a glider has had a tragic encounter with a stray cat the night before.

Sugar Gliders have the odds stacked against them. From native and introduced predators to competition for nesting hollows or even removal of suitable food sources, the threats posed to them are significant. We saw during East Gippsland's 2019-2020 Black Summer the destruction that bushfires can bring to wildlife and their habitats. In areas of high bushfire risk, such as Moe South, we need to consider bushfire mitigation practices as a means of protecting our local wildlife as well as our own lives and property.

RESILIENCE IN ACTION

Tips and tricks for a bushfire-smart community

Our local values: Edward Hunter Reserve and Biodiversity

Jane Sultana (EHHBR Committee member) and Rebekah Baynard-Smith (CBBM Facilitator)

The Value of Nature

Did you know? Research reveals that being in nature, or even viewing scenes of nature, reduces anger, fear and stress, and increases pleasant feelings.

The Edward Hunter Heritage Bush Reserve is a magnificent example of soul soothing nature. It is the largest remaining patch of remnant vegetation in the Latrobe City and occupies 58 hectares on the urban fringe of Moe. The Reserve is classified by two Ecological Vegetation classes: Lowland Forest (EVC-16) and Damp Forest (EVC-29).

The Braiakaulung people of the Gunaikurnai Nation were the original custodians of the land upon which the EHHBR now stands. From around the late 1870s, the area was originally set aside as a water catchment with a storage dam - the Moe Railway Reservoir - to supply water to the Moe Railway Station for steam trains.

Since it started being used as a public Reserve from the mid-1900s, its landscape has evolved to be what it is today. Whilst it is an eco-rich environment, according to the EHHBR Committee's data records, several native fauna populations have been in decline. Koalas disappeared from the Reserve during the 1960's, the last bandicoot was spotted in 1979 and the last antechinus in 2010. Wombats have been frequent victims of roadkill along bordering Borrmans St and no wombat has been seen (dead or alive) since 2020. Birds, fish, reptiles and amphibians are declining too.

Changes to the landscape and ecology at the Reserve have potentially been influenced by a mixture of factors, such as contaminated runoff water polluting the reservoir, nearby land clearing and developments, as well as exacerbated climate-induced heatwaves putting stress on native flora and fauna. Invasive weeds compete with native flora, and foxes and cats kill wildlife.

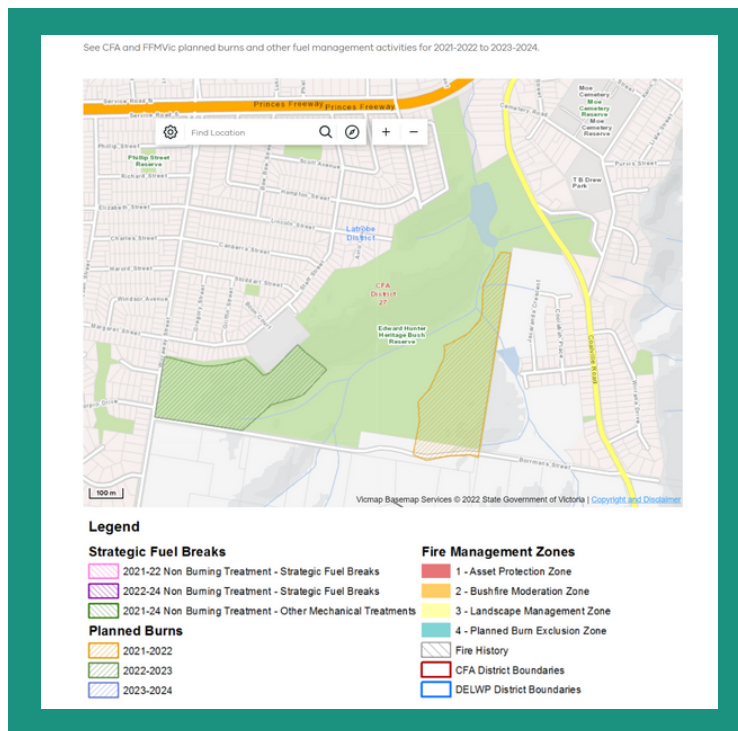
The EHHBR Management Committee is working hard to protect this beautiful place. They are continually monitoring the health of the Reserve, photographing and recording species, taking water samples and removing invasive weeds.

The committee has a long-term plan to install several dams to filter runoff water. This will help to clean the water before it enters the reservoir. The first of these dams has already been built.

Next time you drive past the Reserve along Coalville Road, why not stop and have a read of the history and information boards and take a stroll through this 'soul soothing nature'.



Committee members collecting water samples for analysis



This **QR code** takes you to a short video by a member of the Friends of Edward Hunter group who has designed a new dam filter.

In addition to the dam, the Committee has been working with CFA and Latrobe City Council to schedule some planned burns in sections of the reserve, as a land management practice and to reduce bushfire risk. To be notified of when these might happen, subscribe to plannedburns.ffm.vic.gov.au (and see map above).