



## **SASSAFRAS-FERNY CREEK FIRE BRIGADE**

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### **Don't be distracted by "quick fixes"**

A local CFA captain and one of Victoria's most experienced bushfire educators has cautioned residents about being confused by "wish lists" of proposals being advanced by lobby groups active in the Dandenongs and Yarra Valley.

Sassafras-Ferny Creek CFA Captain John Schauble said it was easy to suggest all kinds of "quick fix" solutions.

"Some people are seeking quick and easy answers for what do in bushfires," he said. "Unfortunately, there are none."

"More important than simplistic proposals for sirens, warnings, bunkers or refuges is that people first take the time and trouble learn something about bushfire and its place in our local landscape," Mr Schauble said.

While it was heartening to see people taking an intense interest in bushfire issues, he said it was vital that the public conversation was an informed one.

"Most importantly, people have to take some responsibility at a very personal level for their actions rather than waiting for someone else to tell them what to do."

Some recent proposals appear to originate from commercial operators seeking to sell products in fire-prone areas of Victoria.

Meanwhile, a national telephony-based early warning system is being developed by government ahead of the coming fire season.

"The truth is that in places like Sassafras and Ferny Creek, the best warning is the weather forecast," he said. "On days of extreme fire danger, if you want a guarantee of safety, then you leave the area early."

"It's pretty simple really: absolute safety from bushfire is at the bottom of the hill, out of the fire zone."

Mr Schauble, author of the award-winning *Australian Bushfire Safety Guide*, said that if people chose to remain in the area high-risk days, this always carried with it a degree of risk. The risk varies depending on where people are, what they do and the extent to which they have prepared for the impact of fire.

Mr Schauble said the brigade was keenly awaiting the interim findings of the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission. But a range of practical and expert guidance on bushfire survival was already freely available, he said.

CFA runs detailed community education programs offering information on how to prepare for the impact of bushfire, such as Community Fireguard. A suite of additional information tools is being developed to help residents prepare ahead of the coming fire season.

For more information: [www.cfa.vic.gov.au](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au)

