



FIRE SERVICES
COMMISSIONER
VICTORIA

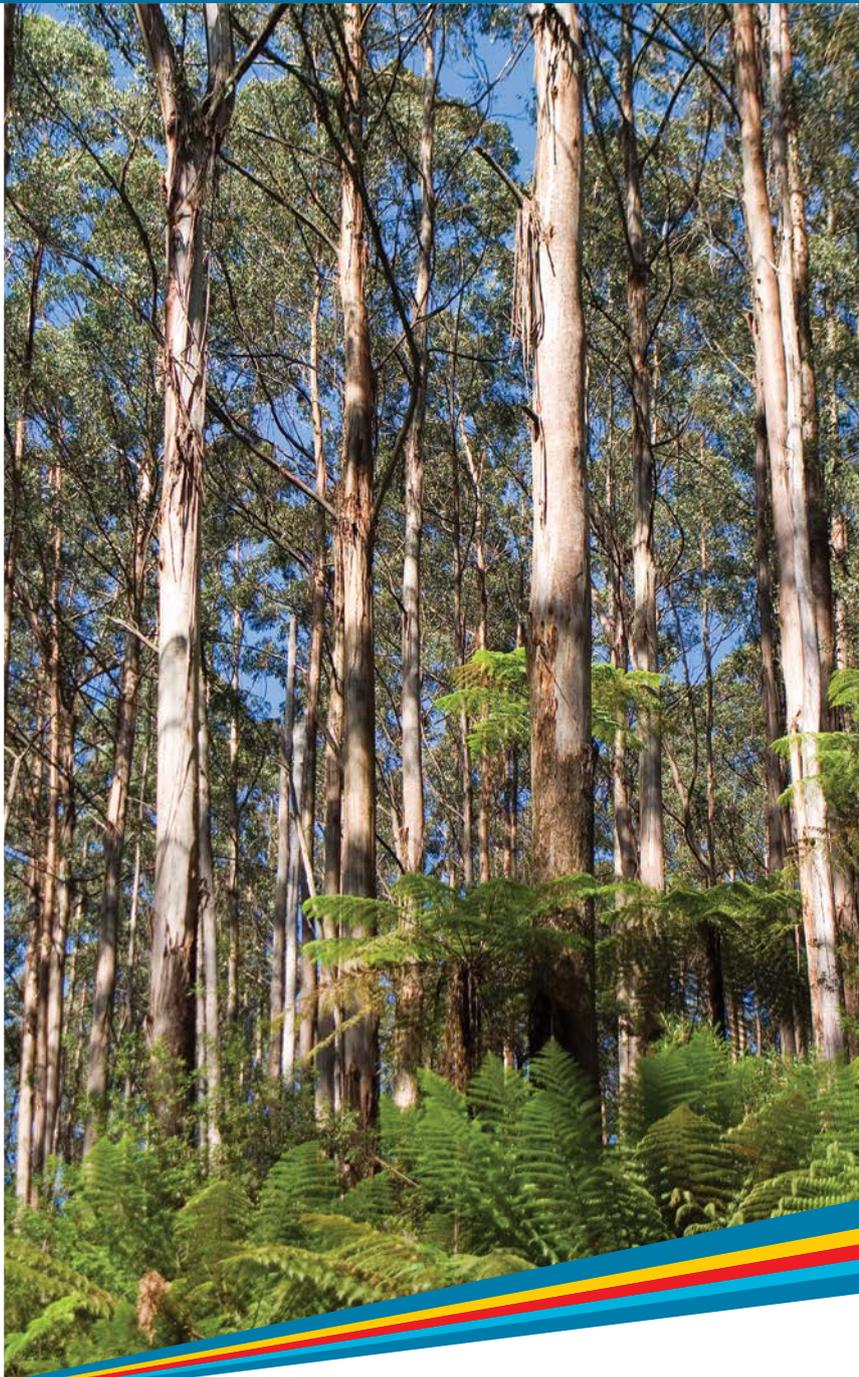
What you need to know about Community alerting sirens in the Dandenong Ranges

In selected locations this summer, we will use sirens to alert communities to significant emergencies such as fire, flood, severe storms and hazardous material incidents. Sirens will be available for community alerting in 23 towns and communities across the Dandenong Ranges. During this period, we will work with local CFA brigades and the community to test processes and improve our understanding of the use of sirens.

It is important to understand that if you hear a siren sounding for five minutes in your area, there is an emergency nearby and you must seek further information. In the first half of 2013, we will ask you for your feedback on the effectiveness of the sirens and how the community reacted to any events. We will use this information to help shape the broader rollout of sirens for community alerting in other Victorian locations.

Craig Lapsley PSM
Fire Services Commissioner, Victoria

See overleaf for more information >



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Why is this a 'pilot program'?

The Dandenong Ranges is one of the first areas in Victoria to test a network of sirens for community alerting. We want to know how to effectively use and integrate sirens to alert communities before we expand their use across the state.

We will learn from the experiences of the community and emergency services in the Dandenong Ranges so that when we use sirens more broadly we know the system is right.

Why was the Dandenong Ranges selected?

The Dandenong Ranges is a high-risk bushfire area and a number of brigades here already have existing sirens, making it an appropriate location to test their use.

Which communities are involved?

Sirens will be available for use in communities of Cockatoo, Gembrook, The Basin, Belgrave, Belgrave Heights, Belgrave South, Clematis, Emerald, Olinda, Kallista, The Patch, Kalorama, Mt Evelyn, Menzies Creek, Monbulk, Sassafras, Selby, Upwey, Upper Ferntree Gully, Silvan, Narre Warren East, Macclesfield and Ferny Creek. The Steels Creek community in the Yarra Valley is also involved in the pilot program.

When will community alerting sirens be ready for use in the Dandenong Ranges?

The upgrades to sirens should be completed in December and January. The community will be kept updated as works progress.

What do the sirens mean?

If a siren sounds for up to 90 seconds it indicates a CFA brigade is responding to an incident nearby. A continuous siren for five minutes means that there is a significant emergency and you must seek further information because it may affect you.

What should you do if you hear a community alerting siren?

If a siren sounds for five minutes, you must seek further information immediately from a source

such as the emergency services' websites, the Victorian Bushfire Information Line or emergency broadcasters such as community radio stations, ABC Radio or Sky News.

For example, if it is raining heavily check the VICSES or the Bureau of Meteorology website for river and creek flood warnings. If it is hot and windy, check the CFA website or listen to emergency broadcasters for warnings and information. On high fire danger days make sure you monitor conditions and know where to get the information you need.

When will a community alerting siren be activated?

Every significant fire, severe storm or flood is managed by an incident controller. They are responsible for issuing warnings to the community. When an emergency is likely to have an immediate or life-threatening impact, a warning is issued. These warnings will automatically activate the community alert siren. This means people must seek further information so they can decide what action they will take.

What happens at the end of the Dandenong Ranges pilot?

The sirens will remain in use for community alerting. The feedback and information we collect during and after the summer period will guide the broader rollout of sirens for community alerting in other locations in the state.

Where can I find more information on the siren pilot program?

More information about community alerting sirens is available at www.firecommissioner.vic.gov.au. Community members can provide feedback about the siren pilot program to a dedicated email address sirens@firecommissioner.vic.gov.au. For information on warnings and incidents during emergencies please visit www.cfa.vic.gov.au, and www.ses.vic.gov.au, or listen to emergency broadcasters such as community radio stations, ABC Radio or Sky News.