



# FIREBREAK

Sassafras-Ferny Creek Fire Brigade

No.30, Summer 2006-07

## LOOKS LIKE IT'S GOING TO BE A LONG, HOT SUMMER ...

Expert predictions about fire conditions across south-eastern Australia this summer are far from encouraging. In September, serious bushfires claimed homes and property in NSW — weeks before the fire danger period normally begins in that state. Tasmania and SA have also endured serious outbreaks. In Victoria minor outbreaks have also been cause for concern. The Total Fire Ban imposed on 4 October in the north-west, was the earliest on record. A TFB on 12 October was the earliest in the Central district since 1981.

But what does all this really mean? Over the past few years there has been an increase in the number of summers when both the potential and the realisation of the bushfire danger have increased.

The reality is that those of us who live in known bushfire-prone areas including the Dandenongs need to plan **every** summer in future on the basis that a bushfire may occur. To talk about "good" or "bad" bushfire seasons is largely irrelevant. The past is no longer a guide. As last summer showed across Victoria, even in relatively mild conditions, bushfires can and will burn, claiming lives and property.

### "So, what can we do?"

Get involved. That doesn't mean you have to join the fire brigade (although we're always happy to welcome new

members!). But it does mean you have to **think** about the possibility of bushfire and **plan** for it.

- Go to a community bushfire meeting (see over page)
- Join (or start) a Community Fireguard group (contact the CFA Area Office **8739 1300**)
- Read the literature provided by the CFA (if you want some, there's plenty available from the brigade or via the CFA website **www.cfa.vic.gov.au**)
- Talk to neighbours about working together Devise a bushfire plan for your family & home.

### Fire restrictions

CFA has set the start date for fire restrictions in the Shire of Yarra Ranges as Monday, 18 December 2006. **However, it is very likely that restrictions will be brought in at an earlier date due to the prevailing conditions.** Even now, residents should use common sense when lighting up, not burn off on windy days and exercise extreme care at all times.

- Under existing local laws, burning off is only permitted for genuine fuel reduction purposes.
- Think about the interests and comfort of your neighbours before lighting up.
- Consider alternative ways of getting rid of garden waste.

## CAROLS on the MOUNTAIN

Join us for an evening of song and community celebration



Special guest performer:

Suzanne Johnston

- Music from the Sing Australia Choir, Ferny Creek & Sassafras school choirs, Upwey High School Band
- Carol booklets, glow sticks on sale
- Sausage sizzle, coffee & cakes, soft drinks

When: **Saturday 16 December, 7.30 pm**  
(gates open 6.30pm)

Where: **Ferny Creek Recreation Reserve**

\* Free entry \* Parking available \* No Alcohol

IN CASE OF FIRE: DIAL 000

## Tanks very much ...

Different types of rainwater tanks can play an important role in defending the home against bushfire. A Bushfire Co-operative Research Centre and CSIRO research project examining the performance of rainwater tanks was conducted at the NSW Rural Fire Service experimental research facility. The research investigated the effects of typical Australian bushfire exposures on both residential and commercial water tanks of steel and plastic construction. Anecdotal evidence already suggests that steel water tanks offer greater protection to both residential and commercial property in the event of a bushfire than alternative materials because of their non-combustibility. The full results from this research will be used by Bushfire CRC and the CSIRO to:

- a) Influence how building codes and planning guides are developed, particularly around bushfire risk areas
- b) Help provide advice to property owners on the level of risk to their homes and businesses
- c) Help develop education programs for local communities

### Research results

#### 1. Steel Construction

Of the different materials tested, spiral wound, steel tanks performed best under all exposure conditions. All steel manufactured tanks maintained structural integrity when faced with a 30 minute flame immersion test, simulating an adjacent structural fire.

#### 2. Steel Construction with Bladder Bag Style Liner

Steel construction bladder tanks maintained structural integrity during all tests. The bladder construction proved able to retain water during and after the fire-front, which is critical for the protection of property and assets in the event of a bushfire.

#### 3. Polyethylene (Plastic) Construction

Polyethylene tanks demonstrated structural deformation during the 30 minute flame exposure, resulting in the tank splitting itself and melting down. Polyethylene tanks were at risk of total failure from adjacent combustible items are present, such as forest litter, fences or other polyethylene tanks.

Source: Bushfire CRC, *Update 8*, August 2006, [www.bushfirecrc.com](http://www.bushfirecrc.com)

## BRIEFLY

### BURN-OFFS SCHEDULED

DSE/Parks Victoria have scheduled a number of fuel reduction burns in the brigade area during spring and autumn. These will proceed if and when the conditions permit. Residents in adjacent areas should receive ample notification. Burns are planned in Sassafras, One Tree Hill and Tremont. Contact DSE for more information on **136 186** or [www.dse.vic.gov.au/fires/](http://www.dse.vic.gov.au/fires/)

### SPONSOR A CAROL, SEND GREETINGS

Want to target your local market? Businesses wanting to advertise in the Carols on the Mountain booklet or become sponsors of the event — we have some super deals. Families or businesses can sponsor a carol in the booklet for just \$50 — strictly limited opportunities! And if you want to save the environment and support the brigade, send their friends and neighbours a Christmas greeting via the Carols booklet (1/8 page = \$50) You can even include a picture! Contact Anna-Marie on **9755 1870** for details.

### WATER RESTRICTIONS IN FORCE

Water availability (or the lack of it) has an important impact on CFA operations. The brigade is conscious of the need not to unnecessarily waste water, especially in times of drought or severe rainfall deficiency. One measure we have taken is to capture rainwater for training and station maintenance. Of course, it's impossible for us to train firefighters without using *some* water, but rest assured we are committed to best practice, sustainable use of this precious resource at all times.

### AUXILIARY ASSISTANCE

The brigade auxiliary is activated to help cater to the needs of fire crews, whether it be a hot cuppa or a full-scale meal during a prolonged fire or incident. The auxiliary is always keen to hear from anyone who would like to play a role that doesn't involve fighting fires but is a crucial part of our operations! Contact Dianne Potts for more details **9755 1687**.

## BRIGADE CONTACTS

**John Schauble 9755 1402**

**Alan Potts 9755 1687**

**Anna-Marie Shew 9755 1870**

**Fire Station (answering service): 9755 1078**

**E-mail: [sfcfb@pacific.net.au](mailto:sfcfb@pacific.net.au)**

**CFA Area Office, Lilydale: 8739 1300**

**Victorian Bushfire Information Line: 1800 240 667**

**CFA website: [www.cfa.vic.gov.au](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au)**

**IN CASE OF FIRE, DIAL 000**

## COMMUNITY BUSHFIRE MEETINGS

Public bushfire safety meetings will be held in your local area on the following dates as part of the joint agency *Fire Ready Victoria* program:

**18 January 2007, 7.30pm:** Cnr Mt Erin Road and Mountview Rd, Ferny Creek

**20 January 2007, 3pm:** Village Green, Cnr Mt Dandenong Tourist Rd and Mountain Highway, Sassafras

**27 January 2007, 3pm:** Fire Station, 21 Clarkmont Rd, Ferny Creek

*For information about other meetings nearby: [www.cfa.vic.gov.au](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au) or 1800 240 667*

**BUSHFIRE + PLAN = SURVIVAL**