

Looking to an unpredictable summer ahead ...

With snow flurries in the Dandenongs into September and a winter that just refuses to gove up, it's still too early to be speculating about the sort of summer bushfire threat that we might face in the hills. Indeed, some fairly mixed messages emerged at the start of spring when prognostications traditionally begin.

What we do know is that winter was cold and dry - much lower rainfall than normal locally in May and June, followed by average falls in July, August and September. However, late summer and autumn brought higher than average totals. If you tally up the rainfall for Ferny Creek from January to September it comes to 863.6.6mm compared to the long-term average for Mt Dandenong of 854.3mm (Source: BOM)

However, other parts of Victoria have not fared so well in the rainfall stakes, particularly West and East Gippsland (where the

first fires for the season broke out in September) and the northeast. Good rains in cropping areas means growth and the prospect of an earlier than normal start to the fire season in those locations.

What does all this mean? Spring will be critical. The Bureau's Climate Outlook issued in late September doesn't show a strong rainfall trend one way or the other in southeast Australia, although temperatures are expected to be warmer than average.

What we also know is that there is never room for complacency and that the time to think about and prepare for the summer ahead is **RIGHT NOW**.

Do take care when burning off for fuel reduction purposes. Despite the local moisture, there have already been a handful of escaped burn offs locally. Check the local by laws before you begin and register your burn on 1800 665 511.

There's lots of information available



and we can with both general advice and more localised information. Feel free to call in at the station Wednesday evenings or Sunday mornings.

www.cfa.vic.gov.au

www.emergency.vic.gov.au

<http://www.facebook.com/SassafrasFerryCreekFireBrigade>

Come and join us to celebrate 75 years of service!

This year marks the 75th year anniversary of the official formation of the Sassafras-Ferny Creek Fire Brigade.

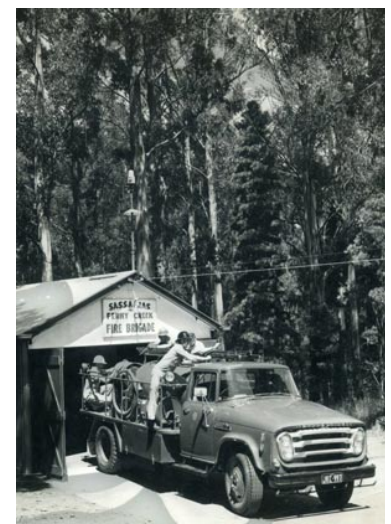
The brigade plans to celebrate this with an "open shed" day on **Sunday, 12 November 2017 from 10am to 3pm**, to which the whole community is invited. This will be an opportunity for you to come and learn a little more about what we do, to look back on where we came from, how we developed and look forward to where we might be going next!

So drop in anytime over the course of

the day. There will be a brief presentation at 1pm to mark the occasion.

Mostly, however, it will be a chance to catch up with old friends, share a cuppa and a chat, look at some photos of days gone by and check out a historical display of fire fighting paraphernalia.

Of course, there will also be plenty of expert advice on hand and loads of free information to help you prepare for the coming bushfire danger period.



When the siren sounds ...

You may remember that last year we surveyed our community about the use of the local fire sirens and the impacts these might be having on our community. The community overwhelmingly supports the continued use of sirens ... and the brigade agrees.

Originally, sirens were meant to alert firefighters to come to the station. Since the advent of pagers and other technologies, this function is less important. However, the community has become accustomed over the past 60 years to the "heads up" a siren gives.

So it is important that when a siren sounds, it means something to you.

The brigade has tailored its "routine" siren usage to eliminate callouts such as car accidents and non-urgent matters that have little impact on the wider community. In addition, the use of the sirens at night has been curtailed.

The sirens will still sound (day and night) when the brigade is responding to any reported bushfires across the summer months.

These changes in no way alter the use of the sirens for community alerting under the State's emergency management arrangements.

WHAT DOES THE SIREN MEAN?

When the siren sounds for no longer than 90 seconds, it simply means the brigade has been dispatched to an emergency. For you, it is a trigger to check the VicEmergency app or the webpage to see what and where that event is. You can then monitor the event using those sources.

When the sirens sound continuously for 5 minutes, it means there is a Watch and Act message or Emergency Warning in effect for this area. You **MUST** find out more information and act upon it. Sources include the app, the webpage or an emergency broadcaster such as 774 ABC Radio or Sky TV

In addition to the CFA sirens in Clarkmont Rd, Birds Rd and Hethersett Rd, there are three additional sirens in the One Tree Hill area that are activated only during the summer months as part of the Ferny Creek Bushfire Alert System. You may also hear sirens from neighbouring communities, such as Belgrave, Upwey, Kallista, Upper Ferntree Gully, Olinda and beyond.

Especially in summer, when you hear sirens, it is **NOT** a signal to evacuate. It is a signal to seek more information urgently

Briefly ... Briefly ... Briefly ...

Time to get ready for bushfire!

This year, there will be four public events in the local area to help prepare for the coming summer:

- **Sunday 12 November 2017, 10am-3pm** - Open Day at the fire station, 21 Clarkmont Road
- **Sunday 3 December 2017** - Open Day at the Ferny Creek Community Fire Refuge, School Road (relevant if you live close by)
- **Wednesday 17 January 2018 at 7pm** - Community Meeting at the fire station, 21 Clarkmont Road
- **Saturday 20 January 2018, 2pm** - Community Meeting at the fire station, 21 Clarkmont Road

Check out the CFA website for additional bushfire readiness meetings in the local area:
www.cfa.vic.gov.au

Can we get to you in an emergency?

Electric gates

A number of properties in our area now have electric gates. Ensure your gate has a manual override feature so your property is accessible to emergency service personal for emergency services. If you're not sure, please contact us to discuss.

Property numbers

Your house or property numbers need to be clearly visible from the road. This will mean we can find your property quickly when you most need us!

The numbers should be large and positioned so they can be seen day and night.

Driveways

Fire trucks are big beasts! Driveways need to have enough clearance (4m wide x 4m high) so that a fire truck can gain access. They also need to be clear of overhanging branches and other obstructions.

Brigade & CFA contacts

John Schurink, Captain 9755 1872

Sarah Krumins, Secretary 9755 1981

Fire Station (answering service): 9755 1078

E-mail: secretary@sassafrascfa.org.au

CFA Region 13 HQ: 8739 1300

VicEmergency: www.emergency.vic.gov.au

CFA Website: www.cfa.vic.gov.au

Brigade website: www.sassafrascfa.org.au

Facebook:

<http://www.facebook.com/SassafrasFernyCreekFireBrigade>

