



## WCA AGM 9<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2014 PRESIDENT'S REPORT

### OVERVIEW

It has been another busy year for the Warrandyte Community Association with much activity on bushfire awareness in the 'Be Ready Warrandyte' campaign, meetings with Local Councils and a range of other local issues.

Our website continues to be updated again in response to local events and feedback and features both the WCA home site and the 'Be Ready Warrandyte' Fire Ready Communities project. It is accessible on [www.warrandyte.org.au](http://www.warrandyte.org.au).

### 1. 2013-2014 MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

#### Office Bearers:

President: Dick Davies  
Vice-President: Jonathan Upson  
Secretary: Warwick Leeson  
Treasurer: Bruce Davidson

#### Committee Members:

David Dyason  
Fiona Elliott  
Doug Mealy  
Lesley Ryall  
Doug Seymour  
Meindert Withoff

#### Ex Committee:

Jozica Kutin - Membership secretary  
Briony Bottarelli – Assistant Membership secretary  
Phil Ashfield – Bookkeeping and accounts

Our thanks to all the Committee and helpers for their contribution during the year.

### 2. CONSTITUTION CHANGE

Following the 2013 AGM, the WCA submitted our revised constitution to comply with the new laws for Victorian Incorporated Associations which came into effect on 26 November 2012 under the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012 (Vic). No further advice in respect to our rule changes has been received from the Department of Consumer Affairs.

### 3. AWARDS

WCA has finished the year on a high after 'Be Ready Warrandyte – Living with Bushfire Risk' received a 'High Commendation' in the 2013 *Resilient Australia Awards* and then swept the field with three *Fire Awareness Awards* (presented by the CFA, MFB, State Government, Fire Services Commissioner and the Department of Environment and Primary Industries and sponsored by the ABC and RACV).

**WARRANTYTE COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION INC.**

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Be Ready Warrandyte – Living with Bushfire Risk is a project of Warrandyte Community Association Inc.

Facing competition from over 100 Fire Awareness entries overall, the three WCA winning categories were:

- **Community Preparedness Award:** This recognises and highlights positive actions taken to improve bushfire/fire preparedness within Victorian towns or municipalities. Awarded to the Warrandyte Community Association for its 'Be Ready Warrandyte – Living with Bushfire Risk' campaign.
- **Media and Communications Award:** This award is for an innovative fire related media or communications project delivered through journalism, social media, publications, marketing, public relations, advertising or events, that has increased awareness of fire through responsible reporting and promotion. Awarded to the Warrandyte Community Association and Warrandyte Theatre Company for the video: 'Do you have a fire plan?'
- **RACV Insurance Award for Excellence:** Awarded to one project that stands out as making a particularly significant and innovative contribution to promoting fire awareness in the community. Awarded to the Warrandyte Community Association for the 'Be Ready Warrandyte – Living with Bushfire Risk' campaign.

The icing on the cake was the Warrandyte Community Retirement Housing Cooperative 'Creekside' development winning a Victorian Housing Industry Award. WCRHC began as a WCA sub-committee.

In our turn, WCA presented '*Certificates of Appreciation*' to those who had assisted the BRW campaign in the past two years either on the committee or on special events. They were: Jodi Clark, Lew Wilson, Bruce Marsh, Jason Patton, Kerrie Boyle, Shirl Young, Peter Doyle, Glenn Cockram, Sarah Martin, Sarah Wrigley and Blythe McLennan. We also presented the Warrandyte Community Church with a Certificate in recognition of all the assistance they have given to the campaign as a meeting venue.

#### **4. BUSHFIRE AWARENESS**

##### **Project Management**

The Warrandyte Community Association 'Be Ready Warrandyte' campaign received further support of \$10,000 each from Nillumbik and Manningham Councils in their annual budgets. In addition, the Warrandyte Market Committee will contribute \$2000 and the WCA has contributed \$5000 of members' funds to the campaign. Additional support from the Warrandyte Community Bank (Bendigo Bank) will complete a series of fire plans specific to the local community. Notwithstanding our success in gaining awards, our applications for funding from the State Resilient Community Program and Federal National Disaster Resilience Grant sources this year were unsuccessful.

The current budget will enable the project to continue in its present form until about mid-2015. It is clear that the Councils are reluctant to continue recurrent funding, and in the absence of Federal or State funding we will be unable to maintain the project management at the level which has underpinned our success to date. Furthermore, after three years, some 'campaign fatigue' is evident in the community. Our exit strategy is to finalise the current campaign and fully document the program whilst maintaining the website as a source of local information. In the event of a local disaster, we will be in a position to re-vitalise the campaign as appropriate.

Project oversight continues to be by a Project Management sub-committee consisting of the WCA committee of management, local CFA brigades, CFA Districts 13 & 14, as well as Municipal Emergency Management Officers from both Manningham and Nillumbik. Other community and institutional representatives attend as needed.

We officially launched the campaign on 8<sup>th</sup> December last year at a function attended by Warrandyte MLA, Minister Ryan Smith, local Councillors, senior CFA and MFB fire officers and the Fire Services Commissioner.

Part time Project Management continues to be by the Warrandyte based 'Good Work Group' which has developed a strong communications plan and online presence to inform the community of the objectives, progress and outcomes of the project, as well as on other relevant bushfire awareness and safety related issues. We have farewelled Jodi Clark, whose identity became synonymous with the campaign. We all wish Jodi and her family well in their move to Queensland. Kim Humphris, a communication professional and also a local resident, has taken over from Jodi as Project Manager. She has already made a great contribution to the campaign.

### **Heatwave**

A major thrust of the 2014-15 program is our 'Heatwave' campaign. Whilst bushfire is a high impact but episodic threat, heat stress is a high impact, predictable and recurrent threat. Every year people die as a direct result of heat stress. Our program seeks to research locally available services; canvass the views of older residents; develop a local 'resource' indicating what services are available, when and where; and possibly establish a 'help' line with local volunteers and the Red Cross. In this we are partnering with the Warrandyte Neighbourhood House and Warrandyte Housing Support Services.

### **Toolkit**

We have continued to develop the projects in our 'Resources Toolkit' targeted on the practical needs of the local community and the key elements of an effective bushfire survival plan. Since the last AGM, the 'Be Ready Warrandyte' project has:

1. Launched a new 'Warrandyte Fire Watch' app on our website that brings together Warrandyte-specific information from the CFA, Bureau of Meteorology and Vic Roads.
2. Held two very well attended 'Scenario Planning' events – 'What if it's Warrandyte – Are you ready?' - in November 2013 and October 2014. All the local emergency services, CFA, Police, Parks and some senior Victorian Emergency Services officers participated, together with schools and other local organisations.
3. At the Warrandyte Festival in March, conducted another informal fire poll. Three times as many people left Warrandyte during the fire on 9 February than stayed. This contrasts with a similar poll in the previous year after a grass fire in which two thirds stayed. This result is consistent with a much more extensive poll conducted by the CFA which suggests that the 'Leave early' message is beginning to cut through.
4. Also at the Warrandyte Festival, hosted the CFA 'Captain Koala' show, which entertained young kids and their parents with an energetic stage show promoting fire safety.
5. Organised a 'Bunker Tour' in North Warrandyte in September which enabled residents to compare and contrast different fire shelters in the area.
6. Continued to develop a wide range of publicity materials to advertise the program, updating our website with local information and fire links.
7. Developed an online sample fire-plan tailored to local needs which is being used by residents.
8. Our humorous and very successful educational video, '*Do You Have a Fire Plan*', continues to be used and adapted by fire services in both Victoria and NSW.
9. Older students at the Warrandyte High School have also produced some videos targeting the fire message to their friends and families. We hope to develop these for wider use with the help of WHS students and staff.

10. In a similar vein, Jock MacNeish and Robert Black produced a cartoon presentation, 'A Great Place to Live'. WCA also made a video clip for the RACV to publicise the 2014 Fire Awareness Awards.
11. The Random Hacks of Kindness group continue to donate their time and computing skills, developing a 'What's the plan?' app which will enable computer literate residents to write a personalised fire plan based on four modules prepared under guidance from the CFA. These are: A 'typical' Warrandyte family; someone living alone; those with children; those living with pets.. For the less computer literate, we are adding three more 'pro-forma' fire plans which can be downloaded as needed.
12. We have held joint meetings with the Warrandyte Business Association, acknowledging that an 'Emergency Plan' rather than a specific 'Fire Plan' is required. We are producing notices for display indicating which premises will close on 'Code Red' days.
13. Assisted Councils develop 'New Residents Kits' and Visitor information which inform on fire safety.

## **5. MEET THE POLLIES**

WCA held a very successful 'Meet the Pollies' candidates' forum at the North Warrandyte Community Centre in October. Local MHR and Minister Ryan Smith, Liberal, Steve Kent ALP, and Richard Cranston, Australian Greens fielded questions from a packed hall. As our local member, Ryan Smith, is also the Minister for the Environment, many questions were raised about environmental issues including clear felling of native forests and renewable energy.

## **6. STATE PLANNING ISSUES**

### **Zoning - LDRZ, RCZ, NRZ**

The most significant planning issue over the past several years has been the State Government's Planning Zone 'reforms'. The WCA had three primary concerns with the Government's draft planning zone changes. These were:

- Proposing that the maximum number of dwellings on a lot in Warrandyte would be no less than two
- Cutting the minimum lot size in the Low Density Residential Zone (LDRZ) in half from 0.4 Hectares (1 acre) to 0.2 Hectares (0.5 acres)
- Opening up the Green Wedge areas around Warrandyte to a number of new types and sizes and developments

In the final version of the planning zones, the State Government allowed local councils to determine the maximum number of dwellings per lot. Manningham Council has since confirmed lots in Warrandyte (in the Neighbourhood Residential Zone) will continue to be restricted to one dwelling per lot.

In July 2013, the Planning Minister issued a one year 'reprieve' with regards to cutting the minimum lot size for the LDRZ in Manningham and Nillumbik. After lobbying by the WCA and local councils, the WCA welcomed the decision by The Hon Matthew Guy, Victorian Planning Minister, to retain the current 0.4ha (1 acre) minimum lot size as a permanent schedule in both Manningham and Nillumbik's Low Density Residential Zone (LDRZ). Therefore, the minimum lot size will remain as is for North Warrandyte and Warrandyte west of Tindals Road south of the river. Manningham and Nillumbik are two of less than ten local councils not to have their LDRZ minimum lot size cut in half to 0.5 acres.

With regards to the Rural Conservation Zone (Green Wedge Areas), the Minister did reduce the number of new types of development that would be allowed; however,

some new types of development have been allowed, such as quarries. Limits on the sizes of restaurants and hotels in the Green Wedges has been eliminated.

Residents of Warrandyte lodged hundreds of submissions objecting to various aspects of the State Government's proposed planning zone changes. We thank the State Government for listening to our concerns and demonstrating that 'people power' is still alive and well.

The WCA would like to thank both Manningham and Nillumbik Councils for passing a resolution requesting the Planning Minister retain the current minimum lot size in the LDRZ; together, we achieved a great result for the Warrandyte community.

### **Middle Yarra River Corridor Study**

In a submission on our website, [www.warrandyte.org.au](http://www.warrandyte.org.au) (click *Resources*), WCA argued for maintenance of the environmental aspects of the river especially as viewed from the river, which unfortunately, appeared to have been largely neglected in the draft report. The WCA continues to work with the State Government and their consultant on improving the final report.

### **7. WARRANDYTE FESTIVAL**

The WCA held its usual display at the Warrandyte Festival which invited residents to indicate whether they stayed or left when a fire occurred in Flannery Court in February (see report above).

### **8. WARRANDYTE COMMUNITY CENTRE**

WCA attended the celebration of the first anniversary of the library which has been well patronised. Following WCA representation on potential accidents to schoolchildren crossing to use the library from the opposite bus stop, Manningham Council conducted pedestrian counts, but they were too low to warrant a pedestrian crossing, traffic lights or speed restrictions. The WCA continues to discuss with Manningham Council about facilitating community group meetings in our own Community Centre. At the present time, the rental and insurance expense for community groups holding regular meetings are simply too expensive to be practical. WCA holds its meetings in the Warrandyte Community Church.

### **9. WARRANDYTE BACKLOG SEWERAGE PROGRAMME**

The Yarra Valley Water (YVW) backlog sewerage programme is continuing in North Warrandyte and WCA has raised some residents' concerns with YVW. Uncertainty about potential connection costs, particularly for steeper blocks where the use of machinery to drill and/or dig trenches may not be practical, has potentially been resolved by agreement to use above-ground connection. Our advice from Yarra Valley Water is that the program will not be 'declared' (i.e. finalised) until early 2016, although units will be installed on property in 2015.

WCA has met with Yarra Valley Water (YVW), and has had EPA determine that it is acceptable to lay PVC domestic sewage pipes above-ground as long as the pipe is adequately supported, fitted with expansion joints, and protected from foreseeable damage. The WCA is working with YVW to determine if it might be possible to bury the pipe in shallow soil to make it less visible, but its route would need to be accurately known to avoid damage. Permission for this is an open issue at present.

### **10. TOWN PLANNING**

#### **Proposed Development for 44 – 46 Yarra Street**

The proposal by United Petroleum to redevelop the site at 44-46 Yarra Street as a Petrol Station with a shop and restaurant was withdrawn. An alternative petrol station facility, proposed for the old 'Bird Engineering' site at 1-3 & 5 Yarra Street near the roundabout has proved controversial.

WCA has lodged an objection on the grounds of:

1. Proposed vegetation removal, six mature yellow box, from the roadside reserve.
2. Difficulty of managing and enforcing compliance with replanting and landscaping at service station sites where high visibility is a commercial preference.
3. Difficulty of ingress and egress at the Heidelberg Road / Harris Gully Road roundabout.
4. Non-specific detail relating to signage, lighting and hours of operation.
5. The Association's opposition to the establishment of a fast food outlet at this site.
6. Having regard to the close proximity to Anderson's Creek, the Association is not satisfied that adequate facilities are incorporated into the design to manage contaminated run-off in all weather.

In a populist 'Poll daddy' online poll on the WCA website, 73% were against the proposal and 27% for, with 299 votes cast.

### **Manningham Bicycle Strategy Review**

The Manningham Bicycle Strategy 2013 was approved encouraging greater uptake of cycling. However, WCA continues to lobby for a bike path from Beasley's Nursery to Warrandyte to link with Westerfolds and other bike tracks to improve the bicycle network accessible from Warrandyte in support of a formal submission by the local 'Bicycle Users Group'.

### **Melbourne Hill Road Drainage**

WCA has liaised extensively with residents and Manningham Council on plans to improve the drainage on Melbourne Hill Road. WCA suggested use of IAP2 facilitation in future to ensure residents' concerns are registered. An external environmental study is currently underway together with improved liaison between residents and Council.

### **Warrandyte Mechanics Institute and Arts Association**

WCA supported the WMI&AA in a submission to improve the pathway and carpark ramp surrounding the Hall. Council engineers have investigated the problem.

### **Warrandyte Market**

WCA received concerns from residents, traders and stallholders about various aspects of the extremely successful monthly Warrandyte Market. These were erosion and compaction from parking threatening trees, loss of local identity, no benefit to established traders, boggy pathways after rain and potential fire hazard in summer. These issues have been discussed with the Market Committee and MCC.

### **Grand Hotel**

WCA offered some advice on heritage aspects of the Hotel renovation.

### **Cat Policy**

It has been suggested that Manningham and Nillumbik introduce a total 'Cat Curfew' to restrict pets from attacking wildlife. The issue is under discussion.

## **11. LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

WCA continues to meet formally on a twice yearly basis with Councillors and Officers of Manningham and Nillumbik Councils. We are grateful for the opportunity to update on the 'Be Ready Warrandyte' campaign, lobby on state and local planning issues and to discuss other issues as they arise. Manningham advised that work had begun on the Middle Yarra Backdrop Study funded by the State Government.

## **12. PUBLIC TRANSPORT**

Persistent rumours that the excellent 906 Bus service from Warrandyte Bridge to the City will be reduced in schedule or terminated at The Pines appear to be untrue. Whilst WCA was unable to gain confirmation in writing from 'Transdev', the responsible authority, we were advised by Manningham Council that the service won't be removed from Warrandyte or terminated at The Pines.

WCA has lobbied for improved public transport in Warrandyte over several years. In 2005, WCA held a professionally facilitated 'Traffic Forum', followed by a statistically significant survey in 2007, to develop better roads and public transport. The WCA was also instrumental in obtaining much improved bus services

**Dick Davies**

**President, WCA Inc.  
9th November 2014**