

## The 'Be Ready Warrandyte – Living with Bushfire Risk' Campaign 2012-15

### Background

Following Black Saturday, WCA organised a 'Bushfire Forum' attended by 280 people who worked with professional convenors to voice their concerns and issues. This provided the basis for a comprehensive submission to the '2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission'. Over 700 people attended a subsequent meeting addressed by bushfire scientist, Dr Kevin Tolhurst. Subsequently WCA successfully applied for a State Government 'Fire Ready Communities Grant' with a project we called: 'Be Ready Warrandyte- Living with Bushfire Risk'.

### Aim

The aim of the WCA 'Be Ready Warrandyte- Living with Bushfire Risk' campaign from 2012-2015 was to ensure that every household in the 'Greater Warrandyte' area had an *effective* bushfire plan.

### Committee

The project management committee consisted of WCA members, local Community Fire Guard Leaders, Regional and Volunteer CFA Officers and local Government Emergency Management Officers. Other members of the community and Emergency Services with specialist skills have been co-opted as needed. Analysis of an initial survey and final conclusions has been by the RMIT's Centre for Risk and Community Safety. Professional part time Project Management was by the local 'The Good Work Group'.

### Activities

- **SURVEY:** BRW conducted a statistically significant Bushfire Survey of Warrandyte households to determine levels of awareness – producing a quality report in hard copy and online. Results were published in a 'Key Findings Report' analysed by RMIT Centre for Risk and Community Safety.
- **WEBSITE:** We developed a website [www.warrandyte.org.au/fire](http://www.warrandyte.org.au/fire) with Facebook and Twitter social media sites well populated with current material and activities. It includes a unique 'Warrandyte Fire Watch' App. VicRoads has installed two webcams on Research and Kangaroo ground Roads to monitor traffic gridlock which feed live into the site.
- **FORUMS:** BRW held a community leaders forum to discuss involvement of other Warrandyte groups and many meetings with neighbouring communities to discuss sharing programmes and information. We also liaised with local businesses in fire preparation activities.
- **FIRE PLANS:** BRW drafted a 'sample' fire plan for a 'typical' Warrandyte family. Recently updated with 'What's the Plan' interactive pro-forma plans for four different situations. We launched a light hearted video 'Do you have a Fire Plan?' which went viral and has been taken up or copied by several other local CFA communities and distributed throughout the state by the CFA. It is also being used as a training tool by the NSW Rural Fire Service and has been adapted for use in WA. It stimulated the production of student fire preparation videos at Warrandyte High School.
- **MEDIA CAMPAIGN:** We produced a range of informative and well designed pamphlets and other media as part of a constant 'awareness raising' publicity campaign. We have featured on commercial and ABC Radio and Channel 10 news as well as in the Age and all local media
- **BIG PUBLIC MEETINGS:** we held a well attended 'Bunkers or Bunkum?' forum with CSIRO, followed up with two successful 'Local Fire Bunker' tours. We also organised

three well attended 'Bushfire Scenario Planning' events with local emergency services personnel.

- **STATE SERVICES:** we liaised closely with local and State Emergency Services and Emergency Management Victoria on community fire issues and were invited to participate in State Government workshops on fire related issues
- **LOCAL GOVERNMENT:** we formally reported at intervals back to local Councils who were very supportive of our activities.
- **CONFERENCES:** Gave a keynote presentation at the 2013 CFA Community Engagement & Fire Awareness Forum. 'Be Ready Warrandyte!' was a hit at the Australian Community Engagement and Fire Awareness Conference in May 2014, a National event hosted by the Rural Fire Service, NSW, in Wollongong. We have been invited to present at the 2015 ANZ Disaster Management Conference.
- **AWARDS:** Awarded three 'Fire Awareness Awards' in 2013 including the overall RACV Award for Excellence and received a 'High Commendation' in the 2013 Resilient Australia Awards.
- **HEATWAVE:** we conducted a 'Heatwave' campaign to survey responses to heatwave messaging and conditions irrespective of bushfires, interviewed residents and ran a pilot 'Telebuddy' trial over the summer.
- **FESTIVAL:** BRW surveyed responses to two local fires at successive Warrandyte Festivals and introduced the 'Captain Koala and Friends' show to children and their parents at the Festival.

## Funding

The campaign formally began on 1 June 2012 under the auspices of a Victorian Government 'Fire Ready Communities Grant'. Additional sponsorship has been from Manningham and Nillumbik Councils, the Bendigo Bank Community Fund and the Warrandyte Community Market Committee. Further funding, sought under the Federal Natural Disaster Resilience Grants Scheme and the Victorian Resilient Community Programme, has been unsuccessful. The campaign formally ended in June 2015.

## For further information:

[www.warrandyte.org.au/fire](http://www.warrandyte.org.au/fire)

[http://www.monash.edu/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/461696/12.-MUARC-compendium-Be-Ready-Warrandyte-post-13-April-2016.pdf](http://www.monash.edu/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/461696/12.-MUARC-compendium-Be-Ready-Warrandyte-post-13-April-2016.pdf)