



Warrandyte Community Association

INC. A0042350W

PO Box 75, Warrandyte 3113

Warrandyte Community Association Inc.

Comments on Township Protection Plans for Warrandyte and North Warrandyte¹

1. There should be one plan for the Warrandyte area integrating response in both Warrandyte and North Warrandyte. Plans must be communicated clearly and concisely to all residents in as many ways as possible. There must be clearly designated authority to combine the emergency response plans of Manningham and Nillumbik Councils, CFA, Police, DSE and other Emergency services. Residents need to know what these plans are and who will be in charge.
2. The Warrandyte and North Warrandyte Township Protection Plans should take into account the issues and concerns raised at the WCA Bushfire Forum in May 2009. These are summarised in a Special Liftout Supplement of the Warrandyte Diary in June 2009 and are more fully treated in the WCA submission to the 2009 Victorian Bushfire Royal Commission.
3. Residents emphasised that there is a need for better *Education and Communication* with encouragement for people to take *Personal Responsibility* for their safety, particularly by supporting *Community Fireguard Groups*.
4. *Early Warning Systems* must be improved with clarity as to what they mean: these include telephone trees, up to date websites, a local siren and other suggestions. There is much support for publicising and

¹ Based on a Community Forum held on 5 May 2009 attended by 280 residents and the WCA submission to the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission. A subsequent meeting addressed by Dr Kevin Tolhurst on 6 August 2009 attracted over 700 residents.

utilizing the Forest Fire Danger Index. This should distinguish between days of Total Fire Ban, which can be frequent and when caution is advised but some choose to leave, and days of extreme fire danger when many residents may evacuate.

5. There is enthusiasm for designated, safe *Community Refuges* as Warrandyte has severe *Access and Egress* problems. The Plan should identify places for people and animals to go to for those who choose leave early. These refuges may not necessarily be in the Warrandyte area. Special attention is needed to cater for chronically disabled residents, schools and child care facilities.
6. Better *Resource Allocation* is advocated, training local citizens to defend as well as providing better back-up. More specialist information is required on *Individual Bunkers*. *Building Codes* should be tightened in fire-prone areas.
7. The most contentious area is *Land Management Policy* which has been pre-empted by the State Government's announcement on clearing within close proximity to housing. There is passionate advocacy in favour of maintaining Warrandyte's rich bush environment and conversely for fuel reduction and tree clearing. The WCA view is that decisions should be based on evidence and consistency between Councils.
8. Whilst *Insurance* issues were raised in the WCA forum, it is outside the scope of the proposed Township Protection Plans.

Dick Davies

President

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31 August 2009