



Department of Environment and Primary Industries

Cnr Taylor St & Napier St
Epsom Victoria 3550
Australia
PO Box 3100
Bendigo Delivery Centre Victoria
3554 Australia
Telephone: +61 3 5430 4444
Facsimile: +61 3 5448 4982
www.depi.vic.gov.au
DX 214506
Ref FM/24/3340

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Mr Bernard Slattery
Secretary Friends of Box Ironbark
PO Box 322
Castlemaine, Victoria 3450

Dear Mr Slattery

RE: LODDON MALLEE REGION FIRE OPERATIONS PLAN

Thank you for providing feedback on the Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI) Loddon Mallee Region Fire Operations Plan (FOP) for 2013/14-2015/16. Your submission raises some matters that are specific to particular locations and others that are relevant to DEPI's broader approach to fuel management.

The term 'complement' is often applied in the circumstances where a practical burn unit is not of sufficient scale and continuity to prevent fire-spread under severe and extreme conditions. Contiguous or complementary units provide for effective hazard management at a landscape scale, as well as providing a practical basis for implementation. Smaller units also allow for some mitigation of impacts by allowing implementation to occur over several years instead of a single season and allow a greater diversity within the landscape mosaic.

Fuel reduction burning is conducted under controlled conditions to ensure that risks are minimised. DEPI staff are trained to monitor conditions and to manage fire intensity and fire extent consistent with burn guidelines and objectives. It is recognised that burning in Asset Protection Zones, in some cases, may have some negative impacts. Through a range of methods DEPI seeks to moderate any such negative impacts.

In order to protect biodiversity values DEPI conducts an environmental assessment for every planned burn. Where possible, measures are put in place to reduce the impact of the values, such as exclusion areas, reducing fuel immediately around large trees or reducing the intensity. In the instance of endangered Ecological Vegetation Classes the capacity to exclude areas will depend on zone objectives, practical constraints and consideration of fire sensitivity.

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In relation to Muckleford Dunns Reef (MGFCAS011) planned burn, this area is not all planned for treatment and numerous exclusion areas exist. DEPI will be targeting DEPI will be targeting application of fire within the burn unit in order to achieve bushfire protection outcomes.

Fire management zoning in the vicinity of Mt Tarrengower is being re-considered with the intent of increasing the area of Landscape Management Zone (LMZ) to protect the more ecological sensitive eastern slopes. More specifically, the planned burn Maldon – Tarrengower (MGFCAS001) is a 288 hectare planned burn that was previously zoned as an APZ, but is now a LMZ. This has also triggered a change in the objective for treating this unit to targeting woody weeds such as gorse. Maldon - Perkins Reef (MGFCAS002) was previously zoned as a LMZ, however, a zoning amendment in this area will change the objective from LMZ to Bushfire Moderation Zone (BMZ).

FOPs are rolling three-year plans and many of the fuel reduction activities have already gone through a community consultation and approval process, similar to those highlighted below and we acknowledged that your comments are still current.

- The correspondence received during the 2012 draft FOP consultation period from yourself, relating to Maldon Nuggetys Rd (MGFCAS005) was addressed in the 2012 FOP. A reply from Simon Brown dated 2nd of October 2012 explained that the size of the burn had been reduced.
- The correspondence received during the 2012 draft FOP consultation period from yourself, relating to Taradale – Carnell Rd (MGFCAS0014) and Taradale – Plantation Tk (MGFCAS0 17) was addressed in the 2012 FOP. A reply from Simon Brown dated 2nd of October 2012 explained that the ideal LMZ coverage.

Planned burns Glenlyon – Swords Road (CAS0101), Guildford Rusconis Rd (MGFCAS009), Glenluce – Amandas Tk (MGFCAS015) and Franklindford – Pepper Trees Tk (MGFCAS016), where possible, the environmental values you raised, will be protected by reducing coverage, implementing exclusions areas and raking around large old trees.

I have noted your group's support in assisting with the development of the plans in Castlemaine Kalimna Park and this is encouraging.

If you wish to discuss further the issues that you have raised relating to the Fire Operations Plan, then you are welcome to contact Jeff Wilkie, Murray Goldfields Acting Fire Management Officer on phone 5430 4644. Jeff can also arrange a site visit if required.

Thank you again for providing your perspectives.

Yours sincerely