

# Barwon Otway Bushfire Risk Landscape: Strategic Bushfire Management Planning – have your say in bushfire planning

## Information Sheet 2, August 2013

The Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI) is making important changes to how we plan for and manage bushfires on public land in Victoria, to enable us to better meet the primary objectives of the *Code of Practice for Bushfire Management on Public Land (2012)*:

1. To minimise the impact of major bushfires on human life, communities, essential and community infrastructure, industries and economy and the environment. Human life will be afforded priority over all other considerations.
2. To maintain or improve the resilience of natural ecosystems and their ability to deliver services such as biodiversity, water, carbon storage and forest products.

### What is strategic bushfire management planning?

Strategic bushfire planning describes a new, practical approach that DEPI is taking to manage bushfires on public land.

Strategic bushfire planning is an ongoing process, where public land managers work with community and stakeholders to discuss and select risk-based strategies for bushfire prevention, preparedness, fuel management, response and recovery in their landscape.

### How is this an improvement on what we do now?

Bushfire planning has traditionally been undertaken on a 'fire district' basis – areas of land defined by administrative boundaries. Undertaking strategic bushfire planning at 'bushfire risk landscape' basis will allow us to develop more effective bushfire management strategies. Strategies will be evidence-based and developed in consultation with the community and stakeholders.

Establishing strategies will involve open and transparent discussion about the costs and benefits of different strategy options on bushfire risk reduction, ecological resilience and other matters of importance to the community.

A key output of the strategic bushfire planning process will be a Strategic Bushfire Management Plan that will transparently describe the outcomes that the strategies are expected to deliver. DEPI can then review and continuously improve the strategies and their implementation over time.

### A Risk-based Approach

A risk-based approach to bushfire management planning is guided by the principles of the international standard for risk management (ISO31,000). This approach is applied to strategic bushfire management planning in three main steps:

- establish the risk context
- risk assessment (identify, analyse & evaluate risks)
- risk treatment

A risk-based approach is central to strategic bushfire planning, and will guide the development and selection of fire management strategies into the future.

Planning will be informed by new bushfire simulation modelling and risk assessment technology, including Phoenix Rapidfire, a program developed by the Bushfires and Natural Hazards CRC, University of Melbourne, and DEPI. Drawing together fuel, weather and topography information, Phoenix Rapidfire can be used to analyse bushfire behaviour. Phoenix can also simulate the likely fire behaviour outcomes of bushfires and can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of different treatment strategies.

These tools allow DEPI to measure the reduction in risk of major bushfires to life and property it has achieved through its programs, and test the effectiveness of burns and works without having to wait for a bushfire to occur.

### Barwon Otway Bushfire Risk Landscape Team

The Barwon Otways Bushfire Risk Landscape area incorporates the municipal areas of City of Greater Geelong, Surf Coast Shire, Colac Otway Shire, Corangamite Shire and Borough of Queenscliffe (see Figure 2).

A multi-disciplinary team has been established for this area with team skills including fire planning, community engagement, biodiversity monitoring and risk assessment. This is a multi-agency approach, with the team comprised of staff from various DEPI branches and Parks Victoria.

In consultation with stakeholders, communities and other land managers, the team's job is to develop and implement risk-based bushfire management strategies on public land and support multi-agency, cross tenure strategic planning for bushfire management.

# Strategic bushfire management planning

## Current Projects in the Barwon Otway Bushfire Risk Landscape:

The Barwon Otway Risk Landscape Team is currently working on the Strategic Risk Assessment & Strategy Selection (SRASS) Project, which will be used in the development of the Barwon Otway Strategic Bushfire Management Plan.

The project aims to identify opportunities to align existing or proposed bushfire management treatments or activities on both private and public land to achieve a more effective, multi-agency approach to bushfire management

The project will:

- Focus on strategies that reduce priority risks to meeting bushfire management objectives for the landscape.
- Promote understanding and discussion of the costs and benefits of different bushfire management strategies in meeting landscape objectives.
- Identify an appropriate combination of bushfire management strategies for implementation through a range of existing operational and tactical planning processes.

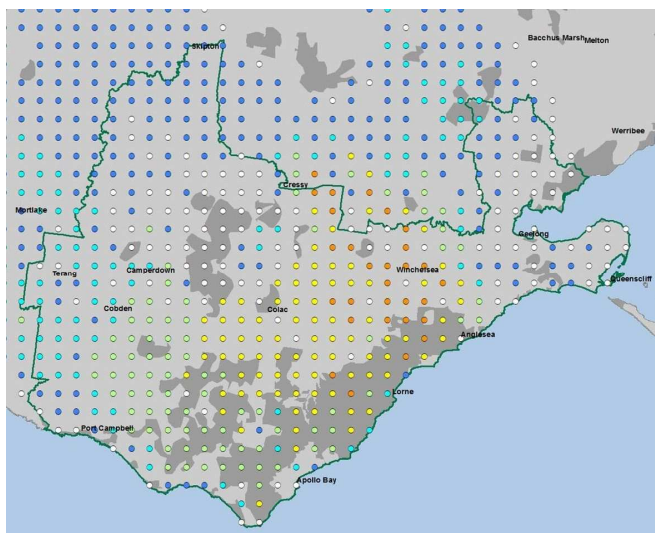


Figure 1: Risk Assessment Technology, modelled using Phoenix Rapidfire. The warmer colours represent where the most damaging bushfires may start in terms of property impact.

## How can community and stakeholders get involved?

There are a number of opportunities to participate in the Strategic Risk Assessment & Strategy Selection Project. There are roles for both individual community members and representatives of government agencies.

## Bushfire Strategy Advisory Group:

The Barwon Otway Bushfire Risk Landscape will convene a Bushfire Strategy Advisory Group to provide community and stakeholder input into the project. This will be initiated in August 2013 through an Expression of Interest and Agency Nomination process. The advisory group will involve community representation of a range of industries and interest areas relevant to strategic bushfire management planning, and will also involve representation of government agencies with links to fire management planning.

Opportunities for involvement will be distributed through agency or community networks, and advertisements will be placed in local newspapers.

Interested community members are encouraged to submit an expression of interest to represent a particular subject matter. The advisory group Terms of Reference clearly outlines the application process, as well as the role and expectations of the BSAG. The Terms of Reference and other relevant documents can be obtained by contacting Peter Galvin, Strategic Partnerships Facilitator (details on page 4).

## Strategic Planning Survey

The Barwon Otway Bushfire Risk Landscape will also develop an online survey to provide further opportunities for interested stakeholders to contribute thoughts and ideas to the project. The survey will open in September 2013, and will gather information on local views and priorities for long term, risk based fire management planning.

## Have Your Say:

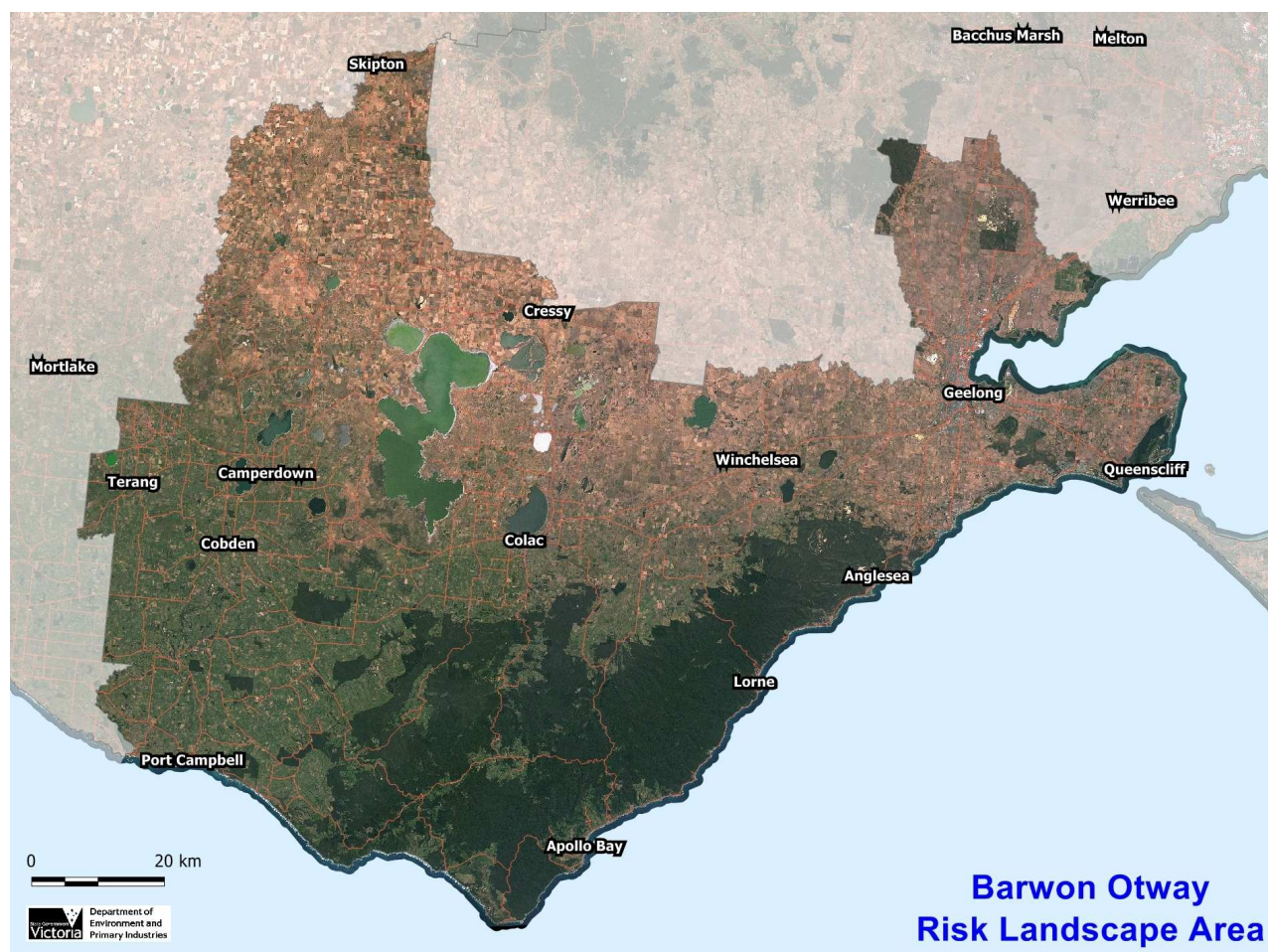
On the rear of this Information Sheet is a 'Have Your Say' page. People are encouraged to contribute thoughts and ideas on strategic bushfire management to be considered in the Strategic Risk Assessment & Strategy Selection Project. The page can be filled out either electronically or as a hard copy and returned to the risk landscape team (details on page 4).

## Keeping up to date with project progress:

We encourage you to register your details for our stakeholder database. This database will be used to provide updated information and newsletters, as well as communicating opportunities for stakeholder participation and involvement in strategic bushfire management planning.

If you would like further information, or to register your details on our stakeholder database, please contact Peter Galvin, Strategic Partnerships Facilitator (details on page4).

# Strategic bushfire management planning



**Barwon Otway  
Risk Landscape Area**

**Figure 2: The Barwon Otway Bushfire Risk Landscape area covers the local government areas of, Surf Coast Shire, Colac – Otway Shire, Corangamite Shire, City of Greater Geelong and Borough of Queenscliff.**

**Table 1: Timeline of events and opportunities for stakeholder participation in the SRASS project:**

<b>Task</b>	<b>Timing</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
Stakeholder Meetings	Aug / Sept '13	Fire management 'problem definition', identify alternative fire management strategies, discuss objectives & consequences.
'Have Your Say'	Aug '13	Provide opportunity for input from public and communities.
Strategic Planning Survey	Sept '13	Provide opportunity for input from public and communities.
BSAG Workshop #1	Oct '13	Introduce project, develop objectives and performance measures for bushfire management strategies.
BSAG Workshop #2	Nov '13	Develop fire management strategies, finalise objectives and performance measures.
Stakeholder Meetings	Jan / Mar '14	Refine measures for objectives and values.
BSAG Workshop #3 Trade Off Workshop	Apr '14	Analyse trade-offs associated with each strategy combination, short-list suitable strategy combinations.
Strategy Selection Workshop	May '14	Select a combination of strategies for implementation.
Project Evaluation	May / June '14	Monitor, evaluate and review the project, to capture key learning's and contribute to continuous improvement and adaptive management.
Project Report	July '14	Capture project outcomes and report on the decision making process.

# Strategic bushfire management planning

## 'Have Your Say'

What is your vision for strategic fire management planning in the Barwon Otway's Risk Landscape?  
How would you like to see long term fire management strategies developed?  
What do you think should be included or considered in the planning process?  
How would you like to participate in this project?

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Would you like to be added to the stakeholder distribution list for the Barwon Otway Bushfire Risk Landscape?

Yes  No

Name:.....

Organisation / Group (if applicable):.....

Town / Suburb:..... Postcode:.....

Telephone:.....

Email:.....

Please complete and return this form to by the 30th of November 2013 to:

*Peter Galvin, Strategic Partnership Facilitator,  
Barwon Otway Bushfire Risk Landscape, DEPI,  
83 Gellibrand St, Colac, Vic 3250.  
Ph: 5233 5537  
Email: [peter.galvin@depi.vic.gov.au](mailto:peter.galvin@depi.vic.gov.au)*

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