



2009 Victorian Bushfires  
Royal Commission

**2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission**

Letters Patent issued 16 February 2009

**Attachment KJD-3**

# **Woods Point & Surrounding District Community Safety Plan**

A local steering committee from the Woods Point area has been established.

This plan is the initial 'all hazard' sub plan for the Woods Point and nearby areas of the Municipality.

This sub plan will sit behind Council's Municipal Emergency Management Plan and is seen as a necessity given the remoteness of the area and the fact that the Woods Point and nearby areas and their local population will need to respond to situations as they arise and often without assistance for some time.

The Plan (whilst in draft form) had a working debut during the 2006 fires which threatened the area and ultimately severely impacted on the Gaffney's Creek and A1 Township and surrounding area.

The experiences of the 2006 / 07 fires resulted in the loss of many dwellings, caused major upheaval to the community and significant impacts on the environment and people. These fires burnt a very large portion of the State and have been compared with the 1939 fires. Fortunately the fires caused by lightning strikes were predominantly contained to Crown land.

On this occasion the change in the weather, the significant lead time and the ability to gather resources all contributed to the community being prepared for the fire and ultimately the Woods Point Township (and other areas) escaped the potential destructive force of the fire.

With funding that had been secured prior to the fires, work has occurred to upgrade a community building – the Woods Point RSL Hall as the relief / recovery centre for the nearby areas, to make it compliant with the standard for buildings in bush-fire prone areas and separately for formalising and improving a township fire refuge near the Woods Point Police Station.

Additional works are planned at Gaffney's Creek where a 22,000 litre water tank has recently been provided to support fire fighting purposes.

Agreements exist for the use of the RSL Hall & Fire Refuge at Woods Point.  
Council is not the owner of the sites.

The plan is to be finalised and presented to the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee.

**A SUB-PLAN OF  
THE MANSFIELD SHIRE MUNICIPAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLAN**

# Woods Point & Surrounding District Community Safety Plan – July 2007

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## Woods Point & Surrounding District Community Safety Plan – July 2007

### PART 1 – INTRODUCTION TO PLAN

The need to develop a separate plan for Woods Point district has arisen mainly because of the remoteness and the unique geographical features of its location that render it more susceptible to various types of hazards and complicate the ability for the communities above Jamieson to cope with emergencies.

The Woods Point area and communities are almost unique in Victoria such that, in the event of an emergency the relevant response and recovery agencies may not be able to access or communicate with the impacted area, and limited local resources may have to cope unassisted until access and/or communication is restored.

The Woods Point and District Community Safety Plan (WPCSP) is a sub plan of the Mansfield Shire Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP).

Development of the plan has been a cooperative process between Council, the Community, CFA and all principal response agencies. The Plan represents a shared view of activities, triggers, response, community capacity, building and location uses etc.

The process provided support to the development on behalf of the Woods Point community of a relief / recovery centre and re-establishing the fire refuge. Improvements to the community facility at Gaffney's Creek are now being pursued.

#### 1. Aim:

The aim of this plan is to provide a localised framework. Agencies, organisations and particularly the local communities can prepare for, seek to prevent or respond to emergencies in the Woods Point Township and surrounding areas. The plan reviews the efficient use of available resources of the community, the municipality, emergency services and other agencies in the event of an emergency.

#### 2. Objective:

The overall objective is to minimize the threat to life, property, the environment and the community in general, from any emergency that may occur within Woods Point and environs.

This plan is a guide for the community of Woods Point and surrounding district and seeks to outline the process of preventing or minimising the effects of natural or man made emergencies and how to respond.

The plan is formulated to assist in the co-ordination and co-operation of the community and participating organisations and to ensure the efficient use of all available resources.

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### 3. Plan Development

Following a Fire Refuge case study community involvement project and discussion between the Community, Council and CFA Region 23 a project was scoped and resulted in a funding submission been developed. The funding application proposed 4 broad concepts which were highlighted during earlier Woods Point project with OESC on the need for & expectations of a fire refuges.

1. A Community owned 'All Hazard' safety plan.
2. To raise the profile of community safety – with a focus on unwanted fire.
3. The need for a *safer* community building to act as a relief / recovery centre available to aid residents of the area including young and elderly, regular visitors including non-resident owners and the significant influx of tourists.
4. To further assess the need and improve the 'mine adit' so as to be formally designated as a 'fire refuge' and undertake maintenance with public funds.

The funding application to the Attorney General's Department "Working Together to Manage Emergencies" administered through EMA was successful.

A local steering committee from the Woods Point area was established and following several meetings and a consultation phase, a first draft plan was developed. A draft was placed on Public Exhibition and widely circulated. A local Community safety steering committee was established to work with Council to further develop the plan.

The Draft Plan had a working debut during the 2006 fires which threatened the area and ultimately severely impacted on the Gaffney's Creek and A1 Township and surrounding area. The Plan has been updated in response to subsequent Community feedback and following some of the experiences of the 2006 / 07 fires which resulted in the loss of so many dwellings, caused major upheaval to the community and significant impact on the environment and people. These fires burnt a very large portion of the State and have been compared with the 1939 fires.

On this occasion the change in the weather, the significant lead time and the ability to gather resources all contributed to the community been prepared for the fire and ultimately the Woods Point Township (and other areas) escaped the potential destructive force of the fire. The fires caused by lightening strikes were predominantly contained to Crown land.

This version of the plan represents the refinement of that earlier draft. It has been expanded to cover the Woods Point and nearby areas of the Municipality.

When adopted the Plan will be sited as a sub plan sitting behind Council's Municipal Emergency Management Plan - and is seen as a necessity given the remoteness of the area and the fact that the Woods Point and nearby areas and their local population will need to respond to situations as they arise and often without external assistance for some time. Whilst fire has been the main focus, the Plan does represent an 'all hazard' risk management approach.

Agreements have been signed (MOU's) for works at and ongoing use of the RSL Hall & Fire Refuge adit as emergency facilities. Council is not the owner /or occupier of the sites and has signed the agreements in its capacity as the agency representing the community. The renovations planned for the RSL hall have been completed and at this date works are well advanced at the fire refuge.

The plan is to be presented to the Municipal Emergency Planning Committee & Council.

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### PART 2 – WOODS POINT & DISTRICT OVERVIEW

#### 1. General:

Woods Point is situated in the Upper Goulburn River Valley approximately 280 kms North East of Melbourne **via Mansfield** along the Maroondah Highway and then the Mansfield Woods Point Road via Jamieson, or alternatively via Matlock from the Marysville and Warburton Woods Point Road. Other nearby townships or settlements include Gaffney's Creek, the A1 Mine Settlement and Matlock. It is envisaged that this Plan will assist all those communities beyond Kevington as generally covered by the Woods Point Police response zone.

Woods Point is the larger town and focal point in this area. It is approximately 90 kms South of Mansfield. The Woods Point Police response zone is approximately 1000 sq. kms of mostly mountainous terrain surrounded by National Parks and State Forests and is generally the same area as defined as the CFA – Woods Point Brigade Assignment Area. The zone overlaps substantially into the Upper Thompson water supply catchment administered by Melbourne Water. There is nothing within this plan that impacts on this organisation operational activities.

The response zone encompasses the townships of Gaffney's Creek, Matlock and A1 Mine Settlement and has a total permanent population of around 32 people subject to seasonal change and has a transient tourist population of up to 200 people on most weekends including regular weekenders who are non-resident property owners. Significant additional population increases occurs over long weekends & school holidays particularly during the summer period. The area is popular amongst 4WD and motorcycle enthusiasts along with campers along the river frontage areas, bushwalkers, rock climbers, fishermen and deer hunters. Gold was discovered in the area in the 1800's and three Gold Mines are still operating in the area (1 of significant size within the Woods Point Township). There are an enormous number of abandoned mines scattered throughout the district with mining relics abundant.

#### 2. Police:

The response zone is patrolled one up by 4WD with policing assistance from nearby Jamieson and Mansfield. The area is covered by Alexandra C.I.U. and Benalla S.O.C.A.U. There is a low crime rate with the main policing issue being the normal range of law enforcement actions including community and individuals risk prevention, searches for lost persons and attending vehicle collisions. The Officer is a focal point in the community and assists DSE and Parks Personnel and Council with their duties.

#### 3. Fire Services:

In recognition of the validated concerns about Fire, the following detailed overview is provided:

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During the summer period there is always a high risk of bushfires. Woods Point has a small but active Volunteer CFA Rural Brigade operating one 4WD Tanker and due to the isolation it is not affiliated with a Group. The Gaffney's Creek community is part of the Brigade and also has a fire pump. The communities and individuals are very 'fire aware' and have developed a high degree of self reliance.

DSE personnel implement three broad fire related prevention strategies:

- Fuel reduction burns to reduce the severity of a wildfire impact, particularly on the townships. These fuel reductions are strategic in nature, pre-planned operations and very dependant on suitable weather conditions.
- Track maintenance to provide access into the areas
- Operation of fire towers at:
  1. Mt. Matlock – Noojee DSE (MGA94 Zone 55, Ref. 284E/410N at ~1372m elevation – VICMAP BOOK CENTRAL, MAP 6457),
  2. Mt. Terrible – Alexandra DSE (AMG Zone 55, Ref. 238E/608N at ~1316m elevation - CFA Regions 23 & 24 Directory 1998, Map 407) **{Note AMG}**,
  3. Mt. Useful – Erica & Heyfield DSE (AMG Zone 55, Ref. 561E/278N at ~1420m elevation - CFA Regions 23 & 24 Directory 1998, Map 452) **{Note AMG}**, and
  4. Mt Buller – Mansfield DSE (AMG Zone 55, Ref. 489E/888N at ~1800m elevation - CFA Regions 23 & 24 Directory 1998, Map 368) **{Note AMG}**

DSE also provide an operational response to fires.

The fire lookout towers provide excellent visual coverage of the "Woods Point District". These towers are all 'manned' on high fire danger days during daylight hours, throughout the declared fire danger period. This service provides the community with an invaluable early warning of any wildfire or smoke sighting. Communications from the towers are transmitted to DSE office and ground personnel, CFA regional offices (via Vic Fire), local CFA Brigade communications officers (direct or via Vic Fire), and each other fire tower via radio and telephone.

#### 4. Ambulance:

The Woods Point area has one of Victoria's last remaining fully operational volunteer ambulance services operated by RAV. Local members have multi-functional roles specific to their small isolated community and may be requested to assist in other roles during an emergency as indicated in this document.

#### 5. Victoria State Emergency Service:

Within Mansfield Shire VICSES has one (1) volunteer unit based in Mansfield township. The Mansfield Unit has approximately 15 members who are trained and equipped for a variety of emergency events. Any significant event within the Shire would possibly see neighbouring VICSES units assisting Mansfield Unit.

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VICSES is the control agency for flood, storm and earthquake within Victoria. They also provide a Road Crash Rescue (RCR) capability throughout the State and are a support agency to other emergency services. For action plans for specific events requiring VICSES response see Appendix H.

In all likelihood, any event (i.e. storm) of significance within this area requiring VICSES's attendance would see the response of a task force; this would ensure adequate personnel and resources to combat the emergency. Due to the isolation and travelling time to respond to Woods Point and its environs VICSES would require accurate information and intelligence pertaining to the extent of damage to ensure its response was appropriate. The local Emergency Coordinator (OIC Woods Point Police Station) would perform the task of sourcing this information.

### **6. Topography:**

The topography surrounding Woods Point Township and the district is heavily treed mountainous bush land, State Forests and Parks, accessed mainly by steep, rocky 4WD tracks. Northern access is via the Mansfield Woods Point Road. Southern access to the town is via the Walhalla Woods Point Road or the Warburton Woods Point Road.

There are numerous creeks and river systems with the main one being the Goulburn River that flows generally South East from its source near Frenchmans Gap to Woods Point thence generally northeast and Northwest to Lake Eildon near Jamieson.

### **7. Climate:**

The climate is typified by cold wet/snowy winters and warm to hot summers, with an annual rainfall average of ~1480mm. Temperature ranges at Woods Point vary between -5°C in June up to 30°C in February, the annual daily mean maximum temperature being 16.8°C. Storms and blizzards are not uncommon in winter with huge winds in the higher regions such as Matlock, which can dry out the forests and bush very quickly in summer.

### **8. Population:**

The area encompasses the townships of Gaffney's Creek, Matlock and A1 Mine Settlement and has an estimated total permanent population of around 32 people with a transient tourist population. During the spring/summer and autumn months, long weekends and School Holidays there can be up to 1000 people distributed around the area.

### **9. Commercial Development:**

The main commercial developments in Woods Point is the Morning Star Gold Mine, Richmond Retreat Accommodation, Commercial Hotel and the Woods Point general store/petrol station. There are two or three smaller Gold Mines operating in the area.



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### 10. Landing Strips:

The closest fixed wing airstrip is the Jessop Phoschek Airstrip, located at the intersection of Thompson Jordan Divide Road and Warburton Road, Saint Clair (MGA94 Zone 55 Ref. 267E/360N at ~1200 m elevation – VICMAP BOOK CENTRAL, MAP 6457). This airstrip is operated by DSE during fire danger periods and is maintained by them.

There are numerous helicopter landing points in the area and these are shown on most maps of the area. The main helicopter landing point in use for the town is the Woods Point Gun Club Reserve on the Mansfield Woods Point Road (MGA94 Zone 55 Ref. 335E/427N at ~720 m elevation – VICMAP BOOK CENTRAL, MAP 6458). This reserve is about 1 km north of town and is a suitable all-weather landing place. There are two other reserves in town that may be suitable for helicopters i.e. the old tennis court near the Fire Station and the open, river flats near Richmond Retreat. The morning Star Mine also has open areas.

### 11. Staging Areas:

These are specific locations throughout the Woods Point area which a control agency may use for grouping resources and they are indicated in Part 3 – Table 7 of this document. These areas are deliberately not promoted as community assembly areas due to the high level of specialist activity during operations.

### 12. Assembly Areas:

For Woods Point Township, the community assembly area is defined as the Emergency Relief Centre (see below). The Hotel, the Gaffney's Creek 'shed' and other venues are suitable locations for community meetings and gatherings.

For outlying communities such as Gaffney's Creek, A1 Settlement and Matlock the Woods Point Emergency Relief Centre is also the primary assembly area, however it is acknowledged there may be instances where those communities cannot travel to Woods Point, therefore secondary assembly areas may be necessary. NOTE; These locations are NOT fire refuges.

**The WPCSC supports the CFA view that persons should seek shelter and protection from radiant heat in any substantial structure rather than risk been caught on the road. Each individual, household, tourist and the community are encouraged to plan for their welfare in the event of a wildfire.**

### 13. Emergency Relief/Recovery Centres:

This plan recognises the need for a Township relief centre including the location, the limitation of no other significant buildings, the older style building standards in the area, the significant number of visitors to the area (the non-resident dwelling and land owners, campers, fishermen, hunters, 4 wheel drivers, etc.) and the needs of the resident community.

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The plan recognises that the area is subject to a number of hazards and potential emergencies and that flood, structural fires and wildfire are a possibility each year.

As a consequence the plan addresses the need for potential self relocation or evacuation to a safe and supported location, and the possibility of the public, including visitors not being able to leave the area due to road closure or other circumstance where it may not be safe to attempt departure. The Plan also recognises that due to location and other circumstances, the Woods Point community and visitors to Woods Point and surrounding areas need to be self reliant and appropriately prepared for emergencies.

The principal public relief centre for the Township of Woods Point is nominated as the RSL Hall and a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been created between Council and the owner for this usage. This location provides an initial point for the public to assemble, receive direction and receive or assist in the provision of emergency relief. The building is not equipped to cater for a large number of persons for a lengthy period and is limited by toilet capacity, no showers, etc. Alternate relief centres in Woods Point are nominated in Part 3 – Table 7 of this document, however they have similar if not greater limitations. Limited commercial accommodation is available in the area. Longer-term relief accommodation (successive nights, etc.) may rely on camping, etc. either nearby or at a reserve. Most residents and visitors have access to camping equipment.

After an emergency, recovery activities may be warranted and the RSL Hall will be the focal point for these purposes.

The RSL Hall site and building exterior has been altered extensively with funding provided to Council from the Federal Attorney Generals Office so as to be generally compliant with the Australian Standard AS3959 'Buildings in bushfire prone areas'. This will help ensure the building is a safe destination to provide relief from most emergencies including fire. It should withstand a fire with appropriate human intervention, and thus be usable after a fire. This building will also be supported with the formalising of the nearby 'fire refuge' (see below).

### **14. Fire Refuge:**

The designated Fire Refuge is located directly south of the new Police Station in a mine adit that was re-established / prepared for this purpose (see Part 3 – Section 8). This mine adit was identified by the community and other organisations after the 1939 bushfires. Works have been undertaken adjacent to, within and at the entry of this mine adit/fire refuge site to improve its safety. Its use is subject to a separate MOU between Council and Vic Police. Other than providing refuge from an approaching fire, the mine adit will not be equipped to provide any other form of emergency relief function.

### **15. Emergency History:**

a) The main historical threats are Fire and Storm. The town of Woods Point and surrounding communities have now been severely affected by fire on 2 occasions 1939 and 2006/07. In 2006/07 there were no lives lost and due to the advance

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warning all tourists and many residents took the opportunity to leave the area in advance of the fire. A small number of non-resident owners also arrived to protect their property. Because of the generally slow moving nature of the Alpine fire on this occasion, time allowed for CFA and DSE to assess their capability and deemed the Woods Point Township (only) as defensible.

Resources were transported into the communities and additional preparation works were undertaken. Power supplies were lost, however the Township was provided with auxiliary power by generators for some weeks.

The very recent fire which destroyed many houses in the Gaffney's Creek and A 1 Township areas and caused environmental damage will be recorded as having had a significant impact on the communities.

The Black Friday bushfires in the summer of 1939 had been acknowledged as a 1 in 200 year event. Towns were destroyed and rebuilt after the 1939 fires.

b) Windstorms are frequent in the area and along with rain, short duration flooding and snow can cause a lot of damage to the environment, infrastructure and buildings. It is common during winter for roads to be blocked by debris and snow, with an occasional road collapse.

c) Motor vehicle crashes and occasional collisions involving motor bikes occur and are more frequent during the winter.

d) Another demand on emergency services involves searches for lost or stranded tourists in the bush.

e) The occasional light aircraft has crashed in the response zone.

f) Industrial/Mine accidents have been rare with the last reported at A1 Mine being a gas incident underground about 15 yrs ago and a schute collapse 30 yrs ago.

There were no fatalities in these incidents.

**16. Woods Point Township / locality Plan:**

See map in Annexure E

## Woods Point & Surrounding District Community Safety Plan – July 2007

### PART 3 – MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING

#### 1. Responsibilities:

The Mansfield Shire Council has a key role in emergency planning and response management throughout the municipality as defined in the Emergency Management Act and the Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP). Council will work in co-operation with communities and all relevant authorities to assist in the implementation of relevant planning, mitigation, and response and recovery activities to prevent or reduce the impact of an emergency.

The Woods Point Community Safety Plan (WPCSP) is a sub plan of the Mansfield Shire Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP). To provide for local input, ownership and to create a framework for ongoing emergency management, a local committee known as the Woods Point & District Community Safety Committee (WPCSC) has been established. This Committee will provide input and local representation in conjunction with the Municipal Emergency Response Co-ordinator (MERC), the Municipal Emergency Resource Officer (MERO), and Municipal Recovery Manager (MRM) at the Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee (MEMPC). The committee members 'powers' will be limited to advisory in nature unless otherwise stated herein.

#### 2. Woods Point & District Community Safety Committee:

This initial committee shall comprise seven (7) local members as follows:

- Chairperson (preferably not an agency representative) –
- Community Representative (Business) –
- Community Representatives (Residents from Woods Point & Gaffney's A1 area)
- Victoria Police (local officer) –
- Rural Ambulance Victoria (local representative) –
- CFA (local brigade representative) –

Ex-officio members from:

- Mansfield Shire Council - MERO/MRM
- DSE (Mansfield) representative
- CFA – Regional representative
- VICSES – Regional representative

The Chairperson shall also be appointed as a member of the Mansfield Shire – MEMPC and represent the Woods Point & District at the twice-yearly meetings of that committee.

The WPCSC should meet a minimum of twice yearly and should aim to coincide any policy meetings at least four weeks prior to the MEMPC meetings to allow any specific issues arising to be included in the MEMPC agenda.

The Mansfield Shire Council shall provide initial support to the WPCSC to allow it to become established and formally accredited as part of the overall MEMPC.

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### 3. Roles of Control Agencies and Emergency Response Coordinator:

These roles are detailed in State Plans and the MEMP (Part 3 – Section 5) but for the purposes of the WPCSP the following brief explanation should clarify the situation. The task of directly controlling an emergency clearly rests with the statutory authority whose function it is to handle such matter, eg:

- Wildfire - Control agency CFA and/or DSE
- Windstorm & Flood - Control agency VICSES

Victoria Police are the co-ordinators of all emergency events within Victoria. Dependent on the size and magnitude of the emergency, the co-ordination of the event will fall to either the local police, MERC or DERC.

### 4. Specific Emergency Roles for WPCSC Members:

Once the committee is established it shall allocate specific roles to individual members, being mindful of other commitments those members may have in the multi-functional atmosphere imposed within the small communities. As an example Woods Point fire brigade members would have considerable commitment in any fire event and therefore unable to undertake specific 'relief centre' roles. Important roles that need to be covered by WPCSC members are:

- **Community Fire Warden** - responsible to monitor local conditions during the Fire Danger Period and relay information to the appropriate CFA /DSE Regional Duty Officer or Incident Controller relative to the level of alert at the time (see Part 5 – Section 1). The role probably sits comfortably with a brigade officer and currently undertaken by the Brigade Comms. Officer.
- **Relief Centre Warden** – responsible to open and activate the Community Relief Centre and establish contact with relevant agencies including the MERO and/or MRM. This person may appoint additional help or delegate duties depending on severity of an event. The WPCSC will best be able to decide if there is a need for a roster schedule.
- **Fire Refuge Warden** – responsible to open and activate the Fire Refuge when directed and co-ordinate orderly accommodation of people seeking refuge during a fire event. Whilst this role is expected to be utilised very infrequently, once it is functioning it could be very demanding. The person allocated the role may require specialist training. The role may also cover responsibility (at the direction of the Police) for orderly control of traffic movement to and from the refuge.
- **Phone Tree** – responsible for the development, testing and updating of one or more community phone trees and for enabling them to be activated. Copies of the phone tree should be provided to Council and principal response agencies.

Other roles such as a designated driver to transport elderly citizens to the relief centre or refuge may be deemed appropriate by the WPCSC and a person delegated to that role. When these roles have been allocated, a list of names and responsibilities should be submitted to the Mansfield Shire MERO so that they can be included in Councils register of accredited volunteers.

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### 5. Emergency Operation Centres (EOC's):

These are centres normally established by an agency for command/control functions of their own agency. They can be divided into two types:

- **Incident Control Centre (ICC):**  
For operations in Woods Point and environs this Centre in most cases will be located at the Woods Point or Jamieson Police Station. In bigger events they may become an operations or sector command point with the ICC located at Mansfield.
- **Operations Point:**  
These *forward control* points are normally located by the control agency to be geographically as near as practicable to the emergency and may be in remote locations and/or used for limited time.

Table 7 details a list of locations that may be utilised for these purposes.

### 6. Staging Areas:

Staging areas are pre-planned locations used in emergency situations basically for the assembly of personnel and equipment of the Control Agency and support organisations working in the emergency area. Refer to Table 7 below for a summary of pre-planned staging areas with comments.

### 7. Emergency Relief and Recovery Centres:

#### Establishment and Operation of Emergency Relief Centre

During an event where there will be considerable impact on the community and possibly requiring evacuation, the Emergency Relief Centre at the RSL Hall shall be activated. This is the only designated assembly area in an emergency. The WPCSC will be responsible for the operation of this facility at that time, with or without assistance from the Mansfield Shire Council depending on the severity of the event and/or isolation from normal support processes. The RSL Hall has been renovated to comply with AS3959-1999 "Construction of Buildings in bushfire prone areas" such that it will offer a secure environment for displaced persons during an emergency and in the recovery phase after an emergency. The hall will have capacity to offer basic facilities for up to ~ 100 persons and should be provided with communication capacity to have direct contact with the ICC & Mansfield MECC. The Department of Human Services will coordinate any recovery process with assistance of the municipality or, if the area is isolated by remote instruction to relevant members of the WPCSC.

RAV volunteers may be requested to assist with Police role of registration of evacuees and may also provide limited medical support in the absence of full-scale emergency support.

In light of this the Police or Red Cross may be able to arrange training in ERAS. A registration kit may be made available at the Woods Point Police Station.

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Refer to Table below for summary of pre-planned Relief and Recovery centres. This is supplementary to the list contained in Appendix D of the MEMP.

### 8. Emergency Use and Facility Table:

LOCATION	RELIEF AND RECOVERY CENTRE	INCIDENT CONTROL CENTRE	OPERATIONS POINT	ASSEMBLY AREA	STAGING AREA	PHONE	RADIO	FUEL	F/F WATER	REMARKS
Gaffney's Creek Community (Fire) Shed	Local	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	N	Y	Limited space as Staging Area, water supply, comms, F/F Trailer. Capacity for relief / recovery operations.
Gaffney's Creek 'Cricket pitch'	N	N	Y	N	Y	?	N	N	Y	Staging area for operations close to both ends of town. Public toilet facility and creek access. Phone lines could be established as required.
Woods Point Community RSL Hall	Y Primary	N	N	Y	N	N	N	N	Y	For use as community relief centre and assembly area. Accommodation and cooking facilities, town water supply. Other facilities to be provided. Parking on roadside only.
Woods Point Fire Refuge Mine Adit	N Refuge only	N	N	N	N			N	Y	For use as refuge only in extreme event, has emergency water supply, (?? fire pump & First Aid)
Woods Point Police Stn.	N	Y Primary	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Has full command post facilities, cooking, shower and water supply, comms, inde. power supply, F/F pump
Woods Point Police site (ex-school buildings)	Y Not Primary Choice	Y	Y	N	N	Y	N	N	Y	Can be used for dual purpose as required, has multi rooms cooking facilities, shower, sleeping, comms, water supply, v limited parking
Woods Point Fire Station	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	For combatants only, has water supply, small kitchen, phone and radio comms, parking for appliances only
Woods Point Ambulance Station	Y Limited	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Old Hospital building. Limited accommodation and cooking facilities, water supply, comms, and medical use.
Woods Point Pictorial Museum	Y Limited	N	N	N	N	N	N	N	Y	Limited accommodation and cooking facilities
Woods Point Gun Club Reserve	N	N	N	N	Y	N	N	N	Y	Principal helicopter landing area for Woods Point. Largest flat area in or near town suitable for marshalling of emergency service vehicles.
Woods Point General Store	N	Y	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	CFA Base Radio and comms centre, food, drinks, cooking, fuels, etc.
Woods Point Commercial Hotel	Y	N	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Main accommodation & meals for Strike Teams/Fire or other agency Crews
Woods Point Morning Star Mine site	N	N	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Not promoted as 1st choice because access road from township is narrow and tree covered. Site itself is reasonably large and open and suitable for helicopter.
Woods Point River flats opposite Richmond Retreat	N	N	Y	N	Y	N	N	N	Y	Staging area for operations close to White City. NB Could become isolated from rest of town.
Matlock Helipad Matlock Hill	N	N	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N	Limited use, comms by permission of private operators, private F/F trailer

The above locations are suitable for various purposes but only as a redundancy.

## Woods Point & Surrounding District Community Safety Plan – July 2007

### 9. Fire Refuge:

Government Policy has recently acknowledged the use of 'Fire Refuges' within the State of Victoria provided that specific and extenuating circumstances exist. This section of the plan shall be read in conjunction with the Fire Refuges in Victoria (Policy and Practice) document published by the Office of the Emergency Services Commissioner (October 2005).

After due deliberation involving Council, other Authorities and in consultation with the Community it has been agreed that having access to a Fire Refuge as a risk management tool is appropriate for the Woods Point environment. A Fire Refuge must be compliant with standards, be subject to at least annual inspection, be maintained on an ongoing basis and be equipped and operated in accordance with predetermined standards.

Access to the Fire Refuge must be signposted and available at all times during the fire danger period – can be secured provided access arrangements always exist. The use of the designated Fire Refuge must be in accordance with the following:

- The decision to go to the refuge must be made **VERY** early,
- Where a risk exists that the wildfire will arrive before time permits for persons to arrive safely at the refuge, other structures such as the home or Community Relief Centre building are to be used – any structure offers some protection from radiant heat,
- First preference should be given to making the family home or other similar structure compliant as much as possible with the Australian Standard AS3959 'Buildings in Bushfire Prone areas', and defensible with ongoing fire safety planning, maintenance and with static water supplies. See Part 4 "Hazard Identification and Treatment ... Individual House Protection".

Under Part 5 – Operational Issues (of this plan) is the circumstance which defines at what stage the call is made for people to go to the relief centre or the refuge. These recommendations are based on Forest Fire Danger Index (FFDI), rate of spread, spotting distance, etc. and have been developed after extensive investigation into how these factors impact the unique Woods Point environment.



Pre upgrade condition of  
Mine Adit /Fire Refuge



## Woods Point & Surrounding District Community Safety Plan – July 2007

### 10. Radio Communications:

Local UHF CB Channel 7 - 8 (Repeater at Matlock Hill for Channel 7)

Note: As a result of the communication issues experienced during the 2006/07 fires, improvement to repeater tower signal servicing the area of Gaffney's Creek and surrounding areas is being investigated.

Police Woods Point:

- UHF CB channel 7 – 8,
- Police SMR Channel P2 Woods Point 200
- Police HF Woods Point 200 channel 39
- Police MMR Channel 04-02 (Metro)
- Satellite/Mobile (CDMA)

CFA Woods Point:

- UHF CB channel 7
- SMR channel Reg. 23A

RAV Woods Point:

- SMR
- MRS
- UHF CB portable Channel 7-8

### 11. Maintenance of Plans:

The WPCSC is encouraged to convene after each emergency that requires the activation of components the Woods Point Community Safety Plan. The committee will:

- (a) Consider any recommendations that may come from the de-briefings of control and support agencies involved in the emergency.
- (b) Recommend changes to the plan to overcome any shortcomings.
- (c) Create minutes of meetings and arrange for their distribution via Council.

NB: Meetings of the local committee may be called at a min 48 hrs notice and shall be conducted in accordance with Council's Meeting Local Law.

### 12. Media Liaison:

The media always play a role in an emergency situation. For this reason it is essential that the media be kept reliably informed of events in order to ensure accurate reporting. It is the responsibility of the Control Agency in conjunction with Victoria Police to disseminate official emergency warnings and updates.

## Woods Point & Surrounding District Community Safety Plan – July 2007

### 13. Evacuation procedures:

The necessity to evacuate all or part of a community threatened by an emergency can arise from a variety of circumstances, eg: Fires, Windstorms, Floods, and Health Hazard etc.

#### Responsibilities:

A recommendation to evacuate will usually be made by the Control Agency in conjunction with the Police. The decision must incorporate the area that is to be evacuated, the route to be followed, the means of transport and the nominated assembly area. **NB: Those with a pecuniary interest cannot be required to evacuate but may be denied access to re-enter an area if not deemed to be safe.**

The following procedures shall apply to provide adequate, factual information in regard to evacuation requirements/recommendations:

- (a) Provide graduated warnings where time permits - based on possible procedures if the emergency situation is not contained. The warnings should advise the public to tune into local ABC Radio for regular on air situation updates initiated by the Incident Controller or Police. These broadcasts will give unambiguous advice to people in the threatened areas, and should include requests to check with neighbours to ensure they are also aware of the danger.
- (b) In a situation requiring immediate evacuation the **Phone Tree** (see Part 13 below and Annexure A) will be activated along with a door knock of the area by available personnel to locate and transport any old or infirm community members. Whether to go to the Emergency Relief Centre or direct to the Fire Refuge will depend on assessment of the situation.
- (c) The Police (including non local) shall be kept informed of emergency situations affecting the community and shall inform the appointed member/s of the WPCSC to ensure that the Emergency Relief Centre and/or Fire Refuge are open when needed.

#### Evacuation Assembly Areas:

The only designated assembly area for the Woods Point region is the Community Relief Centre at the RSL Hall in Scott Street, Woods Point (see Part 3 - Section 6 of this plan and in Table 7). Any co-ordinated evacuation shall be to this location unless the Control Agency and Police co-ordinator consider it necessary to organise an early evacuation away from the area via the main Mansfield-Woods Point, Warburton-Woods Point or Walhalla Roads.

#### Registration of Evacuees:

Victoria Police carry out the registration of evacuees or homeless people, usually with the assistance of Red Cross (See Part 7 of MEMP). For Woods Point that assistance will likely be provided by the local RAV representatives or volunteers.

## Woods Point & Surrounding District Community Safety Plan – July 2007

### 14. Community Warning System:

Back up systems will be essential to ensure that some form of warning is available to the Woods Point District communities during an emergency, even in the situation where electricity and phone services have been disrupted.

- Radio – Broadcast and UHF

Generally, ABC provides the only broadcast radio coverage in Woods Point and surrounding District and they can be a valuable resource for dissemination of community broadcasts, warnings and updates that is not necessarily dependent on local power or telephone supplies.

Similarly most dwellings and businesses and many vehicles have a UHF CB Radio that can monitor a pre-determined channel during an event.

CFA promote that any UHF radios included in their Communications Plan be tested at least once a month.

The WPCSC as one of its initial functions should canvas all habited dwellings and businesses in the Woods Point area to check whether a conventional battery powered radio and/or UHF CB radio is available and functional. They should actually test the reception of ABC, preferably during the day when the signal is probably weakest. Recommendations in relation to improvement to the UHF Repeater should also be canvassed and communicated to Council in relation to any poor coverage areas – particularly if there is an opportunity to remedy the situation.

Advisory brochures or signs should be located throughout the area on approach roads and emphasise the need to monitor the ABC or a particular UHF CB channel in case any warnings are issued.

Most people should be aware of impending weather if they venture into the area and should be monitoring any available media, particularly if there is an indication of a worsening situation.

- Warning Sirens

There are two warning sirens located in Woods Point Township. One is at the CFA fire shed opposite the main assembly area and nominated Relief Centre at the RSL Hall. The second siren is located at the Commercial Hotel. The sirens are a good first alert to the community and they can also be used for events other than fire.

For other areas in Woods Point Township, remote dwellings, the Gaffney's Creek and A1 Township, Matlock, reliance needs to be placed on self awareness and an individual's responsibility to stay in contact with peak community representatives and Agencies as they will not receive the benefit of the CFA Siren.

## Woods Point & Surrounding District Community Safety Plan – July 2007

### **A protocol for the use of the sirens has been developed by the CFA in consultation with WPCSC.**

The sirens should continue to be tested on a weekly basis at a set time. For an actual event requiring community involvement the sirens will be activated by the responding CFA Woods Point brigade member or Police if capacity exists.

NB The new EAS pagers are now the primary brigade alerting system.

At Woods Point a dedicated landline should be reviewed to link the sirens to the CFA fire shed and the Woods Point police station and this system should be provided with power from the emergency generator (at the police station) in case of mains outage.

- Community Phone Tree

Although the CFA siren may be used as an initial alert within the Woods Point Township, the primary warning system, indicating need to evacuate or take other specific action, shall be via the Community Phone Tree(s) developed by the WPCSC (see below). The prompt for the tree to be initiated will be a request from the Police - MERC or DERC, probably relayed to the OIC of the Woods Point police station.

The WPCSC will voluntarily develop and maintain one or more contact phone trees with inbuilt redundancy for the use of the communities and emergency service personnel and volunteers in an emergency situation.

Mobile phones have no coverage within the Woods Point area therefore the phone system can only benefit locals at home at the time of the call. Unanswered calls will need to be followed up and their assigned call group contacted by the previous caller.

Principal and alternate community members should be identified in each area to act as the initial point of contact for the disseminating of any warnings and to also act as the point to feed updates back into the development of the Community Phone Tree.

There is a high degree of absentee ownership of property within the Woods Point area and a percentage of these properties with buildings probably have phones connected. It will be necessary to include that phone number and the home phone number of those absentee owners into the phone tree to be reasonably sure they have been accounted for or can be contacted.

CFA has its own phone conferencing system called Spectrum Pre-conferencing for linking to groups of members in one automated process. For Woods Point Area the list of phone numbers on this system accounts for nearly half of the permanent inhabitants and may very well be the basis for the next step to disseminate a specific message to the rest of the phone connections in the area.

## Woods Point & Surrounding District Community Safety Plan – July 2007

### 15. Community Awareness:

As the attitude of the community to emergencies will have a large effect on its ability to respond to and recover from an event, the WPCSC through its integration with the MEMPC, will have capacity to support and promote prevention and awareness within the community. This support is made more important due to the isolation.

Special awareness initiatives such as prominent advisory signs and leaflets shall be aimed at the large transient (tourist/camping) population that is present throughout the area most weekends, but particularly during the summer months when fire risk is greatest. These should emphasise a need to maintain some form of communications or monitor radio broadcasts when travelling in isolated areas, and the onus of compliance with fire safety regulations during the Fire Danger Period, especially on Total Fire Ban days. Unattended, inadequately extinguished or illegal campfires are a major concern throughout the Woods Point area, and more particularly in remote areas where a fire can become firmly established before the relevant authority becomes aware of it.

DSE produce an excellent advisory brochure entitled “Don’t Get Caught in a Bushfire”. This spells out the precautions people should make if camping/travelling in the bush during the fire season. The municipality, DSE and CFA should promote widespread availability of that document and CFA guidelines for campfires/BBQ during the Fire Danger Period at all commercial and tourist facilities in towns leading in to the Woods Point area.

A system is already in place such that the fire danger period is well advertised throughout the area and Total Fire Ban signs are erected on a daily needs basis at prominent locations and along the main roads leading into the district.

It may be that during the Fire Danger Period a self-registration process similar to that in place for bush walking is set up at Jamieson, Matlock, Walhalla and Woods Point where campers and others who are staying in the area record their name, vehicle registration, proposed camp location, duration of stay and contact details.

This will give authorities some idea of who may be in the bush at any given time and be able to plan accordingly if an emergency arises. Relevant signage promoting this recommendation could be incorporated in the signs mentioned above and will add more emphasis to the need for people to be aware at all times.

Acknowledgement is given to the value of tourism to the Woods Point community, however that same influx of visitors places considerable demands on preparedness for the unexpected, and this invariably falls back on the local community.

During an incident, Council and agencies will always attempt to keep the community informed to the best of their abilities during any emergency situation. This will include the arranging of community meetings (when safe to do so) and updating Councils web page with newsletters and the like.

## Woods Point & Surrounding District Community Safety Plan – July 2007

### PART 4 – HAZARD IDENTIFICATION AND TREATMENT

#### 1. Hazard Identification:

The Mansfield Shire MEMP contains a consolidated risk register summary and outlines a list of Hazards and respective Risk Ratings applicable to the whole of the municipality. Hazard identification and the extent of risk particular to the Woods Point & District community was revisited and communicated to the local community by Robyn Betts at the Office of the Emergency Services Commissioner during a community consultation workshop held in May 2005 as part of the development of the State Fire Refuge Policy and Guidelines. VICSES will assist WPCSC, Council and CFA to expand the risk analysis specifically for this plan.

OESC at the above mentioned workshop established the public opinion that fire was the most significant hazard that would probably threaten the Woods Point community.

Factors substantiating this are as follows:

- History – 1939 fires and the very recent 2006 /07 'Great Divide' fires
- Geography – isolation and steep terrain
- Fighting fires difficult – lack of water pressure/volume
- Lightning strikes – sudden onset and mountainous surround
- Fire starting elsewhere and threatening Woods Point and surrounding areas
- Poor communications and lack of back-up
- Weather changes
- Distance between Woods Point, Jamieson and Mansfield

Risk exposure identified as follows:

- Permanent population max – 38 – **to be validated Fill in gaps below.**  
( Woods Point....., Gaffney's Creek....., A1 Township....., Matlock....., Knockwood.....)
- A 'handful' of elderly people who may be at risk – known within the community and
- a relatively small number of infants and children
- Visiting population – campers, families, 4-wheel drive clubs
- Population increase from **38** to ~500+ during peak holidays (summer)
- Not all visiting population fully appreciative of fire risk or where to access bushfire safety and preparedness information
- Some people camping in bush not aware of declared Total Fire Ban days. Total Fire Ban signs to continue to be displayed at main camping grounds.

The above risks are not people related.

Other obvious risks include

- isolation and loss of services,
- property damage and/or loss,
- infrastructure and environmental damage and/or
- loss and disruption/loss to economic livelihood, i.e. business, employment and tourism.

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The risks/ hazards affecting the area also generally affect the whole of the Municipality, however due to factors of isolation, distance, terrain, road access and the limited availability of outside support, the impact of those risks/ hazards may be more severe, or 'normal' service restoration may take longer.

In particular, loss of vehicular access (road closure due to snow, flood, tree falls, etc.) or loss of power supply and or communication is acknowledged by this Plan and importantly by the community.

### 2. Types of hazards that may be expected in the Woods Point area:

IDENTIFIED HAZARD	EFFECT	RISK LEVEL	TREATMENT OPTIONS
<b>Vehicle Accident/ crash</b>	Isolation (Loss of vehicular access) Death/Injury Infrastructure damage	<b>High</b>	WPCS Plan and WPCSPC actions Warnings Police protocols, RAV protocols, Warnings (signage)
<b>Bushfire &amp; fire</b>	Death/Injury  Isolation (Loss of vehicular access) Environmental damage  Infrastructure damage private and public  Loss of Power Loss of communications	<b>High</b>	1. Warnings, Education, WPCS Plan and WPCSPC actions 2. CFA/ DSE operations (PPRR), incl. 3. Fuel reduction burns 4. Community Education, 5. WMO introduction & promotion, 6. warnings, 7. establish relief centre & or refuge 8. Establish back-up facility 9. Police protocols, 10. RAV protocols,
<b>Windstorm &amp; adverse weather</b>	Isolation (Loss of vehicular access) Tree damage Infrastructure damage Loss of Power Loss of communications Death/Injury	<b>High</b>	WPCS Plan and WPCSPC actions Warnings Establish relief centre or refuge Establish back-up facility “ “ “ Police protocols, RAV protocols, Establish relief centre or refuge
<b>Lost Persons</b>	Death/Injury Resource demand	<b>Moderate</b>	Police protocols, RAV protocols
<b>Snow</b>	Isolation (Loss of vehicular access) Tree damage	<b>Moderate</b>	Warnings WPCS Plan and WPCSPC actions
<b>Landslide</b>	Isolation (Loss of vehicular access) Environmental damage	<b>Moderate</b>	WPCS Plan and WPCSPC actions Warnings
<b>Drought</b>	Environmental damage Loss of income	<b>Moderate</b>	Municipal & other government protocols Community support initiatives
<b>Flood</b>	Death/Injury Isolation (Loss of vehicular access) Infrastructure damage Environmental damage	<b>Moderate</b>	WPCS Plan and WPCSPC actions VICSES protocols, Police protocols, RAV protocols, Establish relief centre or refuge
<b>Loss of Power</b>	Inconvenience Loss of income	<b>Moderate</b>	Redundancies
<b>Loss of Communications</b>	Inconvenience Loss of income	<b>Moderate</b>	Redundancies
<b>Pandemic</b>	Death/Injury	<b>Low</b>	DHS protocols, Police protocols, RAV protocols,
<b>Mine Accident</b>	Death/Injury  Loss of income Whole town affected	<b>Low</b>	Police protocols, RAV protocols, OH&S protocols, establish relief centre or refuge Municipal & other government protocols DHS protocols
<b>Earthquake</b>	Environmental damage Infrastructure damage	<b>Low</b>	Establish relief centre or refuge Police protocols, RAV protocols,

## Woods Point & Surrounding District Community Safety Plan – July 2007

### 3. Hazard Review:

Due to community and seasonal changes the degree of possible risks related to identified hazards may vary. An ongoing role of the WPCSC will be to review the 'Risk Rating' for identified hazards and consider any circumstances that may effect changes to the ratings specified in the MEMP. Their recommendations will be an important component of any reassessment to be incorporated into the MEMP.

### 4. Specific Fire Related Treatments:

It is appropriate that the township of Woods Point and the general District be declared a 'Bushfire Prone Area' to reflect the hazard and the zoning of the adjoining public land. Some initial steps in achieving that have already been made.

#### 4.1. DSE Fuel Reduction Programs

Woods Point and other townships at A1 settlement, Gaffney's Creek and Matlock and isolated areas of freehold property comprise a very small proportion of land within the area compared with public land being administered by DSE.

DSE has developed a Fire Operations Plan for the Mansfield District for the period 2005 – 2008 and that plan forms part of the Mansfield District Fire Protection Plan. The Fire Operations Plan includes areas proposed for fuel reduction burning, ecological burning and road and track maintenance (updated annually). DSE also has a community engagement program as well as fire preparedness, fire prevention and education programs for public land. The map attached as Annexure D shows areas, specific to the general Woods Point location scheduled for fuel reduction burning, however these objectives change on a yearly basis relevant to prevailing conditions.

The map in Annexure D also shows details of Fuel Management Zones surrounding Woods Point and other settlements. These zones reflect the recognition of a high priority for protection, both of the environment and the developed areas of Woods Point and surrounding townships.

The Zones as defined in Chapter 4 of the Fire Protection Plan are as follows:

- Zone 1** – Asset protection (includes lives, buildings, fences and stock, regenerating forest, flora and fauna values)
- Zone 2** – Strategic fuel reduced corridors
- Zone 3** – Broad-area fuel reduced mosaic
- Zone 4** – Specific flora and fauna management
- Zone 5** – Exclusion of prescribed burning

Fuel management zoning allows determination of priorities for fuel reduction based on all values at risk, risk potential and the range of wildfire suppression options desired under most weather conditions. DSE has a positive relationship with the Woods Point and related communities, particularly engaging the community in the planning of future works and providing advice and support when requested.



## **Woods Point & Surrounding District Community Safety Plan – July 2007**

A few strips of freehold land have been identified between the Zone 1 boundary and the built up area of Woods Point along Scott Street that may require treatment to reduce elevated fuels and surface fine fuels and ensure continuity of protection.

**This plan recommended that the local brigade and DSE continue to discuss treatment options to ensure these works tie in with the planned use of the Relief Centre and the Fire Refuge.**

### 4.2. Township Water Supply

Goulburn Valley Water (GVW) administers a reticulated water supply to the Woods Point Township but this is not inclusive of all properties. Some areas around White City are connected through a private arrangement. With GVW assistance a plan of the reticulation should be developed as a layer into Council's GIS. The location of existing hydrants is shown on the township map attached as Annexure E.



The reticulated water supply is sourced from a permanent flow in Brewery Creek several hundred metres upstream of its junction with the Goulburn River and piped via a 90mm diam. PVC underground main to the pumping station adjacent to the Fire Station in Scott Street (see photo above). The water is then pumped to two 9000 litre (2000 gallon) holding tanks elevated at the top of Hurley Street. The reticulation is gravity fed and generally comprises 100mm (4") diam. UPVC mains constructed in 2001, however there are some older sections of 64mm (2.5") diam. galvanised steel main in the Richmond Retreat area. Other types and smaller sizes of pipe are utilised on some of the branch mains and north of the Goulburn River bridge in Scott Street.

The supply is chlorinated but not promoted as a potable source without further treatment. There are several hydrants located throughout the town, but the system has inadequate pressure and capacity to be used as a brigade fire fighting supply direct from the mains. During the hotter months increased demand causes some of the houses at higher elevations to lose supply.

Goulburn Valley Water has indicated it has no current plans to increase the storage capacity but will be happy to discuss any proposals put forward. The reticulated supply system is an invaluable fire aid as an off-peak source to maintain individual house-hold fire fighting tank storages that are recommended within this plan as part of the mitigation initiatives.

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The RSL Hall building has now been equipped with a 22,000 litre storage tank for fire fighting purposes with Hall protection via the pump to the sprinkler system and a hose reel. The supply is also available to CFA

There is a considerable untapped water resource retained within the mine adit (proposed refuge). This supply is reputedly very clean and is considered by many in the community as the emergency back-up source for the town reticulation in the event of the Brewery Creek supply becoming contaminated with ash, sediment or other untreatable product. It could easily be gravity fed direct to the storage tank at the pumping station or RSL Hall. Funding, operational, community expectation and ownership issues need to be resolved before that can happen.

### 4.3. Brigade Strategic Water Supplies

The Woods Point RFB has several sources of fire fighting water supply dependent on portable/quick-fill availability, with several sources in the Woods Point Township. These locations are shown on the plan (Annexure E).

There is a deep hole on the Goulburn River behind the Woods Point fire station (see photo below) from where water can be diverted (via pump) to an overhead standpipe located at the entrance to the fire station off Scott Street. This hole could be deepened and widened to increase its holding capacity, ensuring an adequate back up supply in the summer months when the stream can have very minimal flow. It is envisaged the deepening works will have minimal effect on the flow characteristics of the stream, however would have to be approved by the Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority (GBCMA) and other relevant agencies.

A turn around area to refill water tanks on fire trucks also exists at a) the Gun Club/Cricket Ground, b) at Jack Scott Reserve behind c) the BBQ shelter and d) at White City opposite Richmond Retreat.

As a separate initiative CFA will assist the Woods Point RFB in making application to the Fire Access Road Subsidy Scheme (FARSS) for funding to provide a 25,000 litre tank and delivery pump for fire fighting purposes adjacent to the fire station.

Outside Woods Point the district has access to the River and Creeks where subject to flow, water can be sourced.



Water hole at the rear of the Woods Point Fire Station



Additional works are planned at Gaffneys Creek where a 22,000 litre water tank has recently been provided adjacent to the Community Meeting 'Shed' to support fire fighting purposes.

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### 4.4. Individual House Protection

#### A) Construction of Buildings in bushfire prone areas.

As mentioned earlier in the document most of the houses and commercial structures in the Woods Point area are older timber structures, a lot of which will have been built soon after the 1939 fires that devastated the area. It is believed most of the current buildings in the town (except the new Police Station and RSL Hall) would be unlikely to comply with AS3959-1999 "Construction of Buildings in bushfire prone areas" without major renovation. Therefore, the primary objective of individual house and/or building protection in the area may well be just finding the most cost effective and practical means of protecting these structures from ember attack. There is no compulsion for property owners to undertake works to bring their existing buildings into compliance, but the risk is a considerable incentive and with support of the WPCSC it is envisaged people will become more interested in protecting their asset.

AS3959 provisions entail covering, enhancing or adding to existing structures with materials aimed to protect the building from ember attack. Landowners should be encouraged to prioritise improvements by a simple cost/benefit analysis.

Any new buildings or renovations should of course comply with AS3959 as even without formal declaration, the area is a *Bushfire Prone Area*. Council's Building Surveyor and CFA Community Safety can advise property owners on these issues in the interim.

#### B) Wildfire Management Overlay principals.

These principals relate to the preventative works that can be incorporated around an asset.

i). One initiative that needs little in the way of structural alteration and should be considered for all dwellings is the provision of a dedicated fire fighting water supply tank with a minimum 4,500 litre capacity combined with a portable pump independent of mains power supply. A sprinkler arrangement located on the roof of the building will add an extra element of protection. Leaf guard protection in storm water gutters around the roof provides a passive means of reducing inflammable debris build up. The outlet point of the tank should also be provided with a second coupling point to suit CFA appliances.

See CFA publication "Living in the Bush".

ii). To reduce radiant heat it is also necessary to separate dwellings and other assets from fuels by creating appropriate buffer zones and ensuring those buffers are maintained prior to the fire season. Initially, the MFPO should inspect houses and businesses in the townships to ascertain compliance with the Municipal Fire Prevention plan standards and ascertain what, if any of the above initiatives are already in place. A report of those buildings with fire fighting water supplies should be developed as an Annexure to this plan and updated as situations change. Public input and the assistance of the WPCSP Committee would be encouraged.

Explanatory brochures promoting the above initiatives and awareness of simple fire prevention measures such as storing firewood away from main buildings, cleaning gutters and reducing combustible vegetation adjoining structures, can also be distributed by the WPCSC.

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### 4.5. Application of PPRR to the Woods Point Fire situation

PREVENTION	PREPAREDNESS	RESPONSE	RECOVERY
Provisions of Municipal Emergency Management Plan sit across all stages of emergency management			
Community participation and individual asset protection. DSE Fire Protection Plan and Fire Operations Plan - fuel reduction programs	Community participation and individual asset protection. Public Education & awareness – signage Fire Ready Information distribution Camper registration during FDP	Community participation and individual asset protection.  Incident Action Plan – CFA & DSE. ICC activation WPCSP functional roles	Community participation.  Health & Wellbeing – Relief Centre, Refuge  WPCSP functional roles.
MFPO inspections and directions. Community Education.	Brigades Training & readiness–, other agencies preparedness, Community safety committee.	Communications Plan – CFA & DSE	Temporary accommodation. Welfare provision.
WMO – Property protection (apply principles at moment until formalised)	Relief Centre development. Fire Refuge development.	Alternative supplies – Fuel, Power, and Water.	Reinstatement of services.
BPA – Building modifications (apply principles at moment until formalised)	Community Safety Plan development and ongoing maintenance.	Community Safety Committee activation. Warning system activation.	Business continuity & Tourism plan
Identify risk hierarchy – Community and Stakeholder	Backup provision – Power, Fuel supplies Communications, Water Supply, (Brigade and individual buildings) etc.	MECC activation. Evacuation if required Relief Centre/Fire Refuge activation.	Emergency Relief funding sourced.
	Triggers Code Orange FDI 21-35 Code Red FDI >35 –40 Liaison with Community Fire Warden Fire lookout towers manned		Support and advocacy for private and public asset replacement or improvement works.

## Woods Point & Surrounding District Community Safety Plan – July 2007

### PART 5 – OPERATIONAL ISSUES - FIRE

For a wildfire situation CFA and DSE have developed a Cooperative Agreement to maximise the fire suppression effort at fire incidents where resources from both agencies are involved. The agreement has prompted development of protocols such as the Joint DSE/CFA Incident Control Centre Plans to complement existing CFA and DSE Readiness and Response Plans.

In any event where the two agencies are involved, and that would likely include any wildfire event in the Woods Point District where private property is threatened by wildfire, a decision will quickly be made as to which agency will be the controlling agency. When the incident response is likely to be protracted, a Joint Incident Management Team (IMT) would be established at Mansfield DSE office.

#### 1. Preparedness

For CFA Region 23 in which the Woods Point area is located, CFA and DSE have agreed on specific levels of Grassland Fire Danger Index (GFDI) and Forest Fire Danger Index (FFDI) to activate their plans. When the FFDI is predicted to be greater than 50 the two fire agencies commence formal coordination of activities.

In determining the triggers to activate various levels of response specific to the Woods Point area, it is obvious that conditions can be substantially different in that area compared to the overall CFA/DSE region, therefore a more local set of conditions needs to be applied to determine a realistic FFDI.

An important factor in determining the FFDI is the KB Drought Index and for that to be accurate it needs to be tied to a zero figure (maximum saturation) with daily calculations from that time. Woods Point has a telemetered rain gauge but no other recorded data therefore calculations will only be an estimate, even with interpolation from nearby gauges at Eildon and Mt Buller. Melbourne Water does not have any additional gauges and for their forward planning projections they rely on the existing BoM and DSE network.

During the Fire Danger Period and particularly when conditions indicate increased possibility of fire the CFA has daily contact with groups and brigades and builds intelligence based on local observations. Coupled with inter-agency data this allows CFA/DSE to code each day relative to risk, with a Code Red day being the highest alert. This coding can vary substantially throughout Region 23, which extends from flatland cropping country around Yarrawonga to alpine regions on the Great Dividing Range between Woods Point and Matlock.

On a Code Red day the Incident Controller for the area will liaise with the Woods Point Community Fire Warden (Brigade Member) to obtain an “up to the minute” situation report of local conditions. The CFA level of preparedness at this time may already have assigned and placed crews on a heightened alert level.

The Fire Warden would also be in contact with the Matlock Tower, which would probably be the first location to report any fire breakout in the area.

## Woods Point & Surrounding District Community Safety Plan – July 2007

The table below shows an expectation of actions required from WPCSC members.

### 2. Woods Point Readiness Table:

CODE	FIRE	PERSON	ACTIONS
<b>RED</b> FDI >35-40	Yes	Community Fire Warden	Ensure Community Relief Centre is open and manned. Activate community warning to ensure everyone has fire plan in place. Prepare for influx of campers, visitors into town. Discuss options for immediate evacuation of non-locals with Incident Controller.
		Relief Centre Co-ordinator	Establish Community Relief Centre. Ensure communications with Fire Warden, MERC, MERO & MRM
		Refuge Co-ordinator	On standby. When advised by OIC Police or Control agency open refuge. Ensure communications with EOC.
<b>ORANGE</b> FDI 21-35	No	Community Fire Warden	Liaise with CFA/DSE operations or Incident Controller. Contact Relief Centre Co-ordinator and Refuge Co-ordinator to ensure they are ready to act if needed.
		Community Fire Warden	Undertake immediate check of local indicators and availability of others with nominated roles to perform tasks. Liaise with CFA/DSE operations to fine tune/upgrade current alert if necessary.
<b>YELLOW</b> FDI 6-20		Community Fire Warden	On standby.
<b>GREEN</b> FDI <6		Community Fire Warden	Routine

### 3. Triggers

During the Fire Danger Period if conditions are experienced as highlighted in the example in Annexure G and a fire starts or advances within nine (9) kilometres of Woods Point there could be significant ember attack on the township area. Woods Point is located in a basin at the headwaters of the Goulburn River and is surrounded by steep sided valleys and watersheds running in various directions that, in a fire, compound the potential rate of spread and spotting distance.

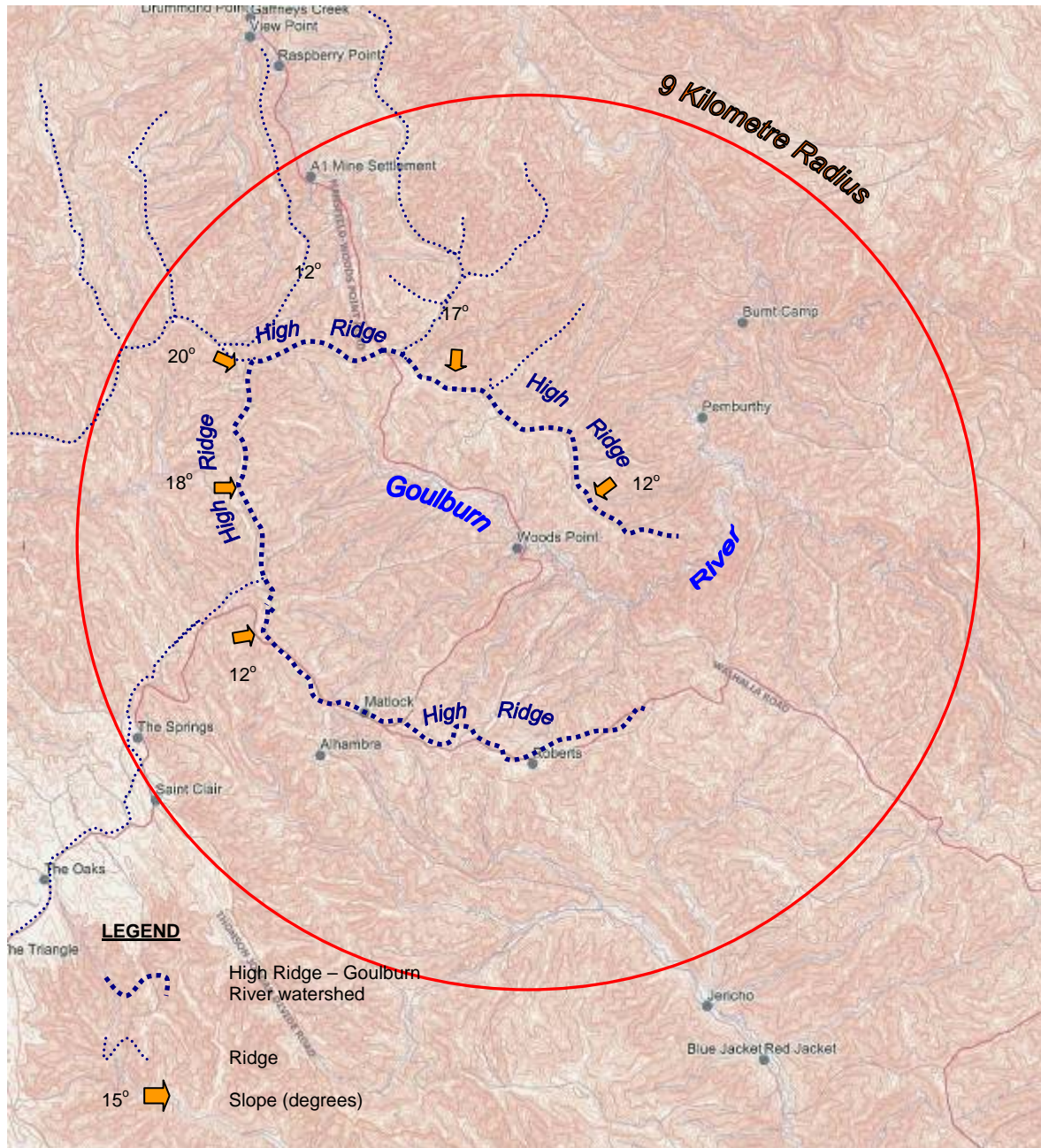
**Any fire occurring on a day when the FFDI is 50 or greater, burning within nine (9) kilometres radius of Woods Point or likely to approach other communities, shall be the trigger for community members to activate their fire plans. At the same time the Woods Point Community Relief Centre shall be opened following contact from the Police member and be readied to accept evacuees if required. Similar scenarios need to be established for the area surrounding Woods Point.**

Putting the above in perspective both the A1 Mine Settlement and the DSE airstrip at St Clair are very close to nine kilometres in a straight line from Woods Point (see Figure 1 below). Whilst the terrain differs, a similar buffer of perhaps nine (9) kilometres should be applied to the outlying communities of Gaffney's Creek, A1 Mine Settlement and Matlock to prompt a readiness to respond/ defend or a move to the Woods Point Community Relief Centre, however **circumstances may**

**Woods Point & Surrounding District Community Safety Plan – July 2007**  
 prevent that option if connecting roads are in doubt or the fire is closer or  
 between Woods Point and those communities.

The CFA policy and advice in Annexure F provides good information, but perhaps the best advice if people have any doubts is to leave early if still safe, and that may mean even before a fire starts if local indicators are well into the Code Red FDI zone – see below and next page.

Figure 1. Topographic Map of Woods Point and surrounds



## Woods Point & Surrounding District Community Safety Plan – July 2007

### 4. Individual action in time of emergency

**CFA Policy – Advice to the community before and during wildfire** (dated 28/11/2005) is attached as **Annexure F** and should be read as the main guide for individual action in time of emergency. However, given the unique Woods Point situation and the fact that a lot of the permanent population will have accepted pre-assigned roles during an emergency, the following pointers are included for further guidance:

1. Safety is always the first priority followed by pre-planning.
2. During the Fire Danger Period become pro-active and listen to radio (ABC 774-AM), UHF Radio or TV broadcasts and become aware of the next days weather, particularly fire weather warnings and declared total fire ban days. Other incidents can occur at any time of the year so be mindful of gale warnings, low level snow forecasts, etc.
3. Initiate your own fire plan when it becomes obvious that conditions may lead to a fire occurring. Don't wait to be told if the indications are clear.
4. Make it a priority to know exactly what your role will be during a fire or other emergency in the Woods Point area. Volunteer in advance.
5. Satisfy yourself you know how long it will take to get from your home or workplace to the Woods Point Community Relief Centre and the Fire Refuge.
6. When prompted by the phone tree ensure you fulfil your role in passing on the message to your nominated group in the tree and if there is no response after three attempts advise the Community Fire Warden.
7. If in the Woods Point township, know the siren warning protocol:
  - Two blasts at 7:00pm on Tuesdays for test.
  - Three blasts any time for alert (CFA & RAV personnel will be paged).  
**Commence monitoring ABC radio at this time.**
8. If you have no particular emergency management role and you decide to stay and protect your residence you must be aware of the consequences of changing your mind in the "heat of the moment". Every known household in the Woods Point area has been issued the CFA brochure "**Living in the Bush**". Read this and the attached **Annexure F** often. Only stay if you have a Plan and are entirely satisfied you can handle any situation.
9. Keep in contact with your neighbours in the lead up to an emergency to ensure they are at least as aware as you are.



## Woods Point & Surrounding District Community Safety Plan – July 2007

### PART 6 – REFERENCES

The following documents, publications and reports have been taken into account during compilation of this plan:

***Australian Standard AS3959 “Construction of Buildings in Bushfire Prone Areas”  
CFA Act 1958  
CFA publication “Can I or Can’t I” (Revised 2006)  
CFA publication “Living in the Bush”  
CFA Policy – Advice to the community before and during wildfire (see Annexure F)  
DSE brochure entitled “Don’t Get Caught in a Bushfire”  
DSE – Fire Protection Plan – Mansfield, Ovens, Shepparton and Upper Murray  
DSE – Mansfield District Fire Operations Plan  
Emergency Management Act 1986  
Mansfield Shire Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP)  
OESC - Fire Refuges in Victoria: Policy and Practice (Oct 2005)  
VICPOL – Division 4 (Upper Goulburn) Emergency Response Plan  
Victorian Planning Provisions  
WMO Applicants Kit***

### PART 7 – ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Council acknowledges the assistance provided by the following organisations and individuals in the preparation and revision of this document and for the works undertaken within the Woods Point Township since the process commencement.

- A. Federal Attorney Generals Department & EMA for project funding:
- the Community Safety Plan,
  - works at the RSL Hall to create a safe community relief / recovery centre and
  - works at the designated Fire Refuge.
- B. CFA Region 23 for funding and resource allocation especially  
Neil Ottaway for assistance with creation of this Plan &  
Mark Williams for advice
- C. DSE Mansfield Senior Fire Management Officer David Wells & crews
- D. Vic Police Ken Dwight OIC Woods Point Police Station
- E. OESC Robyn Betts Manager, Research Projects Unit
- F. Woods Point Community members  
Initial Steering Committee Margaret Martyn, Bill Smithett & Fran Scott  
Woods Point Brigade Members - esp, Max Towe & Tony Rugys  
RSL Hall Committee Ron Martyn & Max Towe  
Morning Star Mine, Ray Wright and team for assistance with fire refuge.

To all those that have provided comment and discussion with the earlier versions,  
Thank you all for your input.

*Kevin Murphy  
Municipal Emergency Resources Officer & Municipal Fire Prevention Officer*

## Woods Point & Surrounding District Community Safety Plan – July 2007

### ANNEXURE A As at Date July 07

#### Woods Point Area - Telephone Directory and basis for Telephone Tree.

Note Users & participants must be clear that:

- a. development and maintenance of the telephone tree, currency of telephone numbers and covering gaps created by absentee members is the responsibility of members of the tree
- b. Council and the CFA will not directly control or manage the tree – this must be community driven
- c. Response agencies make no commitment to contact the tree during emergencies;
- d. there are not guarantees that the tree will function in an emergency;
- e. no participant has a personal responsibility for any other person on the list
- f. messages can vary as they get distributed and meaning may change.
- g. **There may be benefit in creating location specific components of the phone tree**

Police/Fire/Ambulance	000	Additional Info.
Police Station Woods Point	57778235	S/C Ken DWIGHT
Ambulance Woods Point	57778216	
CFA Fire Station Woods Point	57778236	
Police Station Jamieson	57770505	S/C Peter MALES
Police Station Mansfield	57772555	
Health Centre Woods Point	57778231	Nurse Jane DWYER (Wed only)

**Note: This information provided below is for emergency / preparedness only and shall not be used, distributed or disclosed for any other purpose.**

Address	Name	1st Phone	Alternate Contact	Additional Info.
<b>St Clair</b>				
	BEVINGTON Sandra		UHF 7	Ambulance
27 ?	RODDA John			
	<b>Woods Point</b>			
3	BRADBURY Phil, Gail,			CFA
19	CORNIELLE Thomas			
18	DUNN Mick			CFA
20	DWIGHT Ken, Sue			Police, CFA
27	HEBBLETHAITE, Rex			
17	KOZMA Maria			
28	LEAH, Graeme			
29	LIDDELL, Craig			
4	MARTYN Margaret Ron			WPCSC Chair & Ambulance
5	McDONALD Don, Lisa			Bus
6	MILLER Des, Barbara			CFA
	MORNING STAR MINE			
16	MURRAY Duncan			
15	NEWLAND Jim, Vi			
7	PROTHERO Brian, Heather Richmond Retreat Gap			
8	RUGYS Tony, Amy			CFA
9	SCHOENUER Hans, Erica			
10	SCOTT Fran, Emily			CFA, Ambo

## Woods Point &amp; Surrounding District Community Safety Plan – July 2007

11	SCOTT Jamie			CFA
14	STUDD Don, Leanne			Ambulance
1	SMITHETT Bill, Carol			CFA, General Store
30	TONKIN, Carol & Karl			
12	TOWE Max, Gail			CFA, Ambo
2	WOODS Cameron, Kirilie			Hotel Woods Point
13	WRIGHT Ray			Mine Manager
P/T Woods Point	BERNS Ros, Harry			CFA
P/T Woods Point	BEVINGTON Kim, Steve			
P/T Woods Point	BEVINGTON Alan, Irene			
P/T Woods Point	DEERING George, Val			CFA
P/T Woods Point	DILLON Mick, Marie			
P/T Woods Point	ESLER Murray			
P/T Woods Point	FAIRWEATHER Mark, Andrea			
P/T Woods Point	KIRKPATRICK Malcolm			
P/T Woods Point	METCALF Linton			
P/T Woods Point	NORMAN Pam, CHERRY Greg			
P/T Woods Point	NORTON Jason			CFA
P/T Woods Point	SCRAGG Arthur, Barb			
	<b>Matlock</b>			
P/T Matlock	BARTON David			
31	CRIBBES Tim			Bus
P/T Matlock	JESELNİK			
P/T Matlock	McCULLOCH Ian, Marlene			
P/T Matlock	MIFSUD Fr Michael			Church
P/T Matlock	OSTRY Peter			
P/T Matlock	PROTHERO Brian, Heather			Matlock house
22	SIMPSON Dale		Radio	DSE Tower
DSE Tower			++ Radios	
	<b>A1 Township / Mine</b>			
	SPRAGG Nigel, Michelle			
	HELEM Brendan			
	SCOLLOP John			
	LANE Dave			Trail Bikes
	<b>Gaffney's</b>			
23	CISZEWSKI Peter			CFA WP 57778204
Gaffs Tavern	John, Lexie			
24	LUKE Peter			CFA
25	MATTHEWS Bob			
26	SILGO John			CFA
	VON KOSTUCH Fritz, Mary WARD Max			CFA

## Woods Point & Surrounding District Community Safety Plan – July 2007

### ANNEXURE B

#### Abbreviations within this Document

BoM	Bureau of Meteorology
CFA	Country Fire Authority
DERC	Divisional Emergency Response Coordinator
DHS	Department of Human Services
DPI	Department of Primary Industry
DSE	Department of Sustainability and Environment
EMMV	Emergency Management Manual Victoria
EOC	Emergency Operations Centre
ESLO	Emergency Services Liaison Officer
FFDI	Forest Fire Danger Index
GBCMA	Goulburn Broken Catchment Management Authority
GFDI	Grass Fire Danger Index
GVW	Goulburn Valley Water
ICC	Incident Control Centre
IMT	Incident Management Team
MECC	Municipal Emergency Coordination Centre
MEMPC	Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee
MEMP	Municipal Emergency Management Plan
MERC	Municipal Emergency Response Coordinator
MERO	Municipal Emergency Resource Officer
MRM	Municipal Recovery Manager
NRIS	National Registration and Inquiry System
OIC	Officer in Charge
RAR	Road Accident Rescue
RAV	Rural Ambulance Victoria
S&R	Search and Rescue
VICPOL	Victoria Police
VICSES	Victorian State Emergency Service
WICEN	Wireless Institute Civil Emergency Network
WPCSC	Woods Point (and Surrounding District) Community Safety Committee
WPCSP	Woods Point (and Surrounding District)Community Safety Plan

## Woods Point & Surrounding District Community Safety Plan – July 2007

### ANNEXURE C

Map of Woods Point Area – generally reflecting the area within Mansfield Shire covered by this plan.

*(Whilst the area is not formally described and thus able to be plotted accurately on a map, the Assignment Area for the Woods Point Rural Fire Brigade is generally acknowledged as covering the same area and the relevant CFA map is attached herewith. The bulk of the land within the area is controlled by DSE where they are the principal fire management authority. CFA is responsible for fire management on all areas of freehold/private land. Both authorities work closely together in any event that may impact on the area.)*

DRAFT

**Woods Point & Surrounding District Community Safety Plan – July 2007**

**ANNEXURE D**

Map of DSE Fire Protection Plan & Fire Operations Plan objectives for Woods Point Area

DRAFT

**Woods Point & Surrounding District Community Safety Plan – July 2007**

**ANNEXURE E**

Woods Point Town Plan

DRAFT

## Woods Point & Surrounding District Community Safety Plan – July 2007

### ANNEXURE F

#### CFA POLICY – Giving advice to the community before and during wildfire

##### **Definitions**

##### **Policy Objective**

##### **Policy Statement**

##### **Delegations/Authorisation/Responsibilities**

##### **Related Policies**

##### **Other Links and References**

##### **Policy Manager**

This policy provides direction for all CFA personnel who provide advice to the community before and during wildfire incidents.

This policy articulates CFA's position in regard to specific **community safety messages** that influence community capacity to plan and prepare for the event of wildfire and community capacity to respond effectively to the threat of wildfire.

##### **Definitions**

##### ***Community development***

In the context of this policy, community development is the process of building self-reliant communities who are able to recognise and understand risk and are prepared to protect themselves and their property from the threat of wildfire across a range of risk environments.

##### ***Information Unit***

An Information Unit forms part of the Planning Section of the Incident Management Team (AIIMS framework). An objective of the unit is to deliver accurate and timely messages to communities affected by a wildfire that support and encourage appropriate residential response and proactive measures.

##### ***Fire refuge***

A fire refuge is a place or building designated for public use where people may seek short-term shelter from the fire front during a wildfire.

Fire refuges may be one treatment that municipalities and other responsible authorities could decide to implement in response to an identified wildfire risk.

##### ***Community warning system***

A community warning system is a system for alerting community when there is a bushfire in the area.

##### ***Private equipment***

"Private equipment" means equipment or machinery (including tankers) owned or operated by a private individual or body that may be used to help contain, suppress or reduce the effects of a fire. It does not include equipment or machinery used for the private defense of domestic dwellings in a wildfire; or the equipment or machinery contracted by the fire control agency.

##### ***Defendable space***

Defendable space is an area surrounding a building that is free of (or has significantly reduced) continuous combustible vegetation or other fuels. Having a defendable space limits the ability of a moving fire to spread directly to a building through flame contact or radiant heat.

Defendable space provides a relatively safe area from which residents and fire fighters can control spark and ember attack. A number of factors including design, materials and construction, siting and vegetation type influence the amount of defendable space required for a house.



## **Woods Point & Surrounding District Community Safety Plan – July 2007**

### **Policy Objective**

The objective of this policy is to document CFA's established position on CFA community safety messages in order to:

Provide guidance to all CFA personnel who interact with the community through:

- Community development programs
  - Operational response activities
  - Community engagement activities in relation to wildfire risk.
  - Implementation of planning and building regulatory control for wildfire risk mitigation
- 

### **Policy Statement**

The following Policy Statement has a foundation based on sound principles of research and evaluation.

#### ***Options for community response during wildfire***

CFA places a strong emphasis on disseminating key safety messages to the community to ensure that residents are aware of the risks associated with wildfire and have the capacity to make appropriate decisions in regard to personal survival and household protection.

Research demonstrates that the two safest options for residents living in high wildfire risk areas are to:

- Stay and actively defend a well prepared home, or
- Leave the area before threatened and traveling on the roads becomes hazardous

Research shows that the great majority of houses will survive the passage of a fire front if they are well prepared and actively defended by suitably equipped residents. These houses provide safe refuge for residents during the passage of the fire front.

Residents are advised that it is a safe and worthwhile option to stay and defend their home during a wildfire if:

- They are physically able and mentally prepared to defend their home and
- They have a well prepared home with adequate defensible space.

Residents are advised to leave the area well before the fire arrives if:

- They do not have the physical capacity and psychological readiness to actively defend their house and will not be supported by others in the household
- The house is likely to be subject to excessive amounts of radiant heat and direct flame contact due to extreme fuel loads touching or very close to the house.

Residents should be made aware that for a range of reasons CFA is not able to provide assistance to every house during a major bushfire. CFA's first priority is the safety of fire fighters followed by community and asset protection. The Incident Management Team will direct available resources in accordance with CFA priorities, with consideration of fire fighter safety and other factors during the incident.

#### ***Fire-fighting with private equipment***

Some people may decide to undertake fire-fighting activities on their own properties or on the properties of their neighbors. CFA have guidelines that apply to the operation of private equipment at fires on private land, including burn-off activities managed by CFA.

CFA expects that those members of the community who decide to undertake fire-fighting activities using private equipment will comply with the requirements of these guidelines.

## Woods Point & Surrounding District Community Safety Plan – July 2007

### ***Successful defense***

The likelihood that a house can be successfully defended and provide safe refuge during a wildfire is influenced by the presence of adequate defensible space, which is needed:

- to limit a moving fire from spreading directly to the building through flame contact and radiant heat, and
- to provide a relatively safe area from which residents can control sparks and embers.

A range of factors including house design, construction and maintenance, vegetation management and fire intensity will influence the likelihood a house can be successfully defended. These factors may vary significantly throughout the fire season or on any given day.

The likelihood that a house will survive will also depend on the capacity of residents to undertake appropriate response activities during the fire.

Due to the complexity and transient nature of factors influencing house survival, it is difficult for even technical experts to make a categorical assessment of the likelihood of a particular house to survive a range of potential wildfire scenarios. CFA personnel are therefore unable to make definitive statements about whether a house would be defensible or non-defensible during a fire season.

CFA personnel may identify houses that would have a limited chance of surviving a high intensity fire, regardless of potential efforts to actively defend the house. While it is not possible to make a categorical assessment of the viability of these houses, CFA personnel can provide residents with access to advice on how to increase household preparedness in consideration of available tools such as the:

- “Building in Wildfire Management Overlay, Applicants Kit” and
- Australian Standard (AS 3959) “Construction of Buildings in Bushfire Prone Areas”.

CFA will play a lead role in developing the capacity of residents to evaluate the wildfire risk to their property and to make appropriate decisions in response to the threat of wildfire.

### ***Seeking temporary shelter during a bushfire***

CFA recognises that not all people caught in a wildfire risk situation will have the opportunity to remain with a well prepared home. CFA advises these residents to seek temporary shelter in the nearest building or structure able to provide a shield from radiant heat during the passage of the fire front.

CFA advises residents that temporary shelter may be found inside the home or in alternative structures such as neighboring houses, Fire Refuges or in municipal assembly areas. Even structures that are not well prepared may provide enough shelter to shield people from radiant heat during the actual passage of the fire front.

Where people are caught driving in a wildfire situation and no fixed structures are available, CFA recommends that people shelter inside their car. When selecting a place of refuge, residents are advised to avoid being caught out on the road during a wildfire.

### ***Evacuation***

The Emergency Management Act (1986) and the Country Fire Authority Act (1958) gives residents the right to stay with their homes during a bushfire. CFA and other emergency service personnel do not have the authority to order the removal of a person from a property if they have pecuniary interest in the relevant land, building or goods within it.

CFA messages in relation to evacuation during wildfire are:

## **Woods Point & Surrounding District Community Safety Plan – July 2007**

- The decision to leave the area or stay with their property during a wildfire is the responsibility of the individuals concerned and should be made well before the expected arrival of the fire front. The available research suggests that late evacuation by residents is a dangerous option.
- If a resident is away from home at the time of the fire they can legally be prevented from entering the fire area and can be prevented from returning to their residence.
- Victoria Police manages road access in and out of the fire area. While safety is the overriding concern every effort should be made to allow residents and landholders to reach their properties before the fire impacts and as soon as possible after the fire has passed.
- CFA does not encourage any resident to be traveling on the roads when there is a wildfire in the area.

### ***Dissemination tools***

#### *Community Development Wildfire Programs*

CFA personnel deliver wildfire community development programs before and during summer to promote key safety messages to residents. The objective of these programs is to increase the capacity of the community so that residents are prepared for wildfire and are able to respond appropriately.

While CFA endeavors to provide all residents of high risk areas with the opportunity to participate in wildfire preparedness programs, CFA recognises that a proportion of residents living in areas of high wildfire risk will chose not to attend the wildfire preparedness programs offered in their area.

#### *Information Flow*

Victoria Police have responsibility to ensure that due consideration has been given to the issuance of community warnings for wildfire and control the Standard Emergency Warning Signal (SEWS) upon advice from the combat agency.

During a significant wildfire incident CFA will activate an Information Unit to deliver accurate and timely threat messages to the communities affected by a wildfire. These messages have been developed to support and encourage appropriate residential response by the communities at risk. The threat messages are significantly more detailed than a simple alerting system as they aim to provide information to enable people to make appropriate decisions and respond to threat more safely.

The Information Unit will utilise a range of pre-planned dissemination tools to support the delivery of information to the community during an incident. These tools include state and local media, call centers, websites, community displays as well as interactive tools such as door knocks and community meetings.

During an incident the key means of disseminating threat messages to the public are:

- ABC state-wide and regional radio
- Victorian Bushfire Information Line
- The CFA public website ([www.cfa.vic.gov.au](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au))

CFA recognises that rapid onset fires may affect parts of the community before information can be effectively disseminated.

In remote rural areas where radio and Internet access is limited other means of dissemination need to be considered.

### ***Community Warning Systems***

While an alerting system may alert people to an incident it does not provide the range of important information required by a community during a wildfire. An alerting system can only communicate a

## **Woods Point & Surrounding District Community Safety Plan – July 2007**

simple warning message that may or may not be interpreted by the community in a way that enhances their safety.

CFA recognises that some communities will decide to establish a local warning system. For some this will result in an alerting system. CFA does not guarantee to provide, maintain or activate community alerting systems.

CFA will support communities with the provision of technical risk information and access to a range of community development programs, to ensure that any community warning system is used as part of a comprehensive risk reduction strategy. Community warning systems should be used in conjunction with other communication tools such as ABC radio, the Victorian Bushfire Information Line and the CFA public website ([www.cfa.vic.gov.au](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au)).

### ***Other Links and References***

OESC Fire Refuges in Victoria: Policy and Practice (Oct 2005)  
 AFAC Bushfires and Community Safety (Draft) 2005  
 CFA Standard Operating Procedure 9.21 "Private equipment on the Fire / Incident Ground  
 CFA Guidelines for Operating Private Equipment at Fires  
 AIIMS (Australian Interagency Incident Management Systems)  
 CFA Act 1958  
 Emergency Management Act 1986  
 WMO Applicants Kit  
 Victorian Planning Provisions  
 Australian Standard AS3959 "Construction of Buildings in Bushfire Prone Areas"  
 Stay or Go Research Report  
 CFA "Living in the Bush" publication

**Policy Manager -**  
 Director Community Safety

**Policy Stakeholders**  
 Director Operations / Chief Officer and Area Management

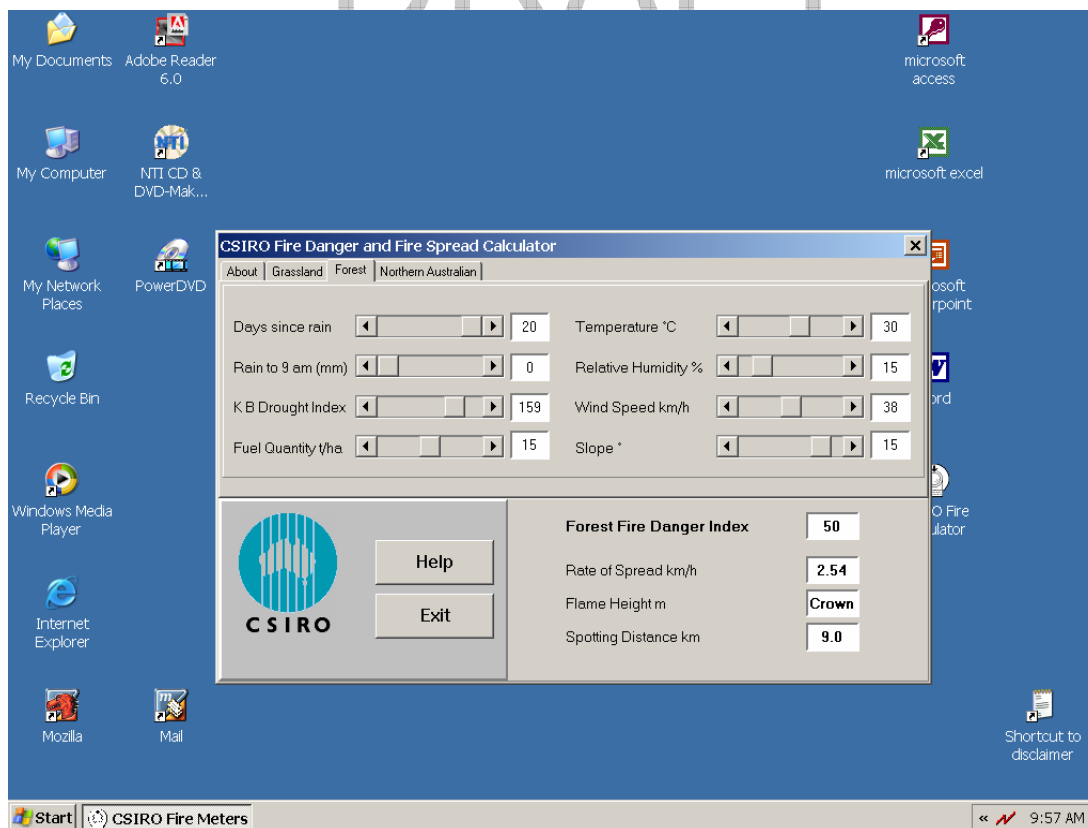
Date approved (this version): 28/11/2005  
 Date due for review: 28/11/2008

## Woods Point & Surrounding District Community Safety Plan – July 2007

### ANNEXURE G CSIRO Fire Danger and Fire Spread Calculator

Figure 1 below shows a screen shot of the CSIRO Fire Danger and Fire Spread Calculator used by agencies to determine the FFDI, Rate of Spread, Flame Height and Spotting Distance using known (indisputable) factors. The example shows figures that could well be expected after a prolonged dry spell in the middle of summer. They indicate it has been 20 days since the last rain and nothing in the last 24 hours. The K B Drought Index is a figure provided by the Bureau of Meteorology on a daily basis for specific areas and indicates the amount of moisture or net rainfall (in millimetres) required to bring soil conditions to complete saturation. The maximum scale figure here is 200mm (or 8 inches) and 159 is not an unreasonable figure to expect after a long dry spell. Fuel quantity of 15 tonne per hectare is a conservative figure in line with prevailing conditions around Woods Point. The temperature and relative humidity figures are also what could be expected mid summer. The wind speed indicates perhaps a change before a storm, and the slope figure is again conservative for Woods Point area. These last two figures have a significant bearing on the Rate of Spread and Spotting Distance. An increase of just 5 degrees slope in this example increases the rate of spread to 3.59km/h and the spotting distance to 12.8km. The more localised these figures are, the more accurate the outcome, and particularly if they are gathered over an extended period.

Figure 1: Example of CSIRO Fire Danger and Fire Spread Calculator



## Woods Point & Surrounding District Community Safety Plan – July 2007

### ANNEXURE H

#### Action Plan by the Woods Point Community requiring VICSES Response

##### i. Flood/Storm

Individual households if requiring assistance due to a flood or storm event ring 132 500.

On receiving multiple calls for assistance via 132 500 the Mansfield SES Unit shall notify the NE Regional Duty Officer who shall in turn contact the Woods Point Local Emergency Co-ordinator (nominally the OIC Woods Point Police Station) whose job it is then to seek information regarding the extent of damage and to determine the level of assistance required.

Liaison between the NE Duty Officer and Woods Point Local Emergency Co-ordinator shall then determine the level of response required. It will then be the responsibility of the NE Duty Officer to co-ordinate the response into Woods Point area after consultation with Mansfield SES Unit Controller.

##### ii. Road Accident Rescue (RAR)

Normal State RAR arrangements should be followed. That is notification to 000 detailing the location of the incident and any injuries.