

Community Based Bushfire Management

The Community Based Bushfire Management (CBBM) project is one of five projects in the Community First stream of the Victorian Government's Safer Together program.

It is delivered by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) and the Country Fire Authority (CFA) in collaboration with a range of other government and community stakeholders.

Bushfire management can be understood as encompassing bushfire prevention, preparedness, response and recovery activities, including the identification of risks, issues and their solutions.

CBBM highlights the importance of community involvement and leadership in bushfire management. CBBM supports the strengthening of an open and trusting partnership between communities and agencies and involves local communities in bushfire management and decision-making.

The program brings together community members and relevant agency staff to use local knowledge and community values to identify bushfire related issues and solutions.

Simply put, CBBM takes a community development approach to bushfire risk reduction.

"When we all work together there is a far stronger, more positive view by the community"

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Acknowledgements

The Victorian Government (Safer Together) · All CBBM Facilitators · All CBBM community members · Agency and Local Government supporters

Relevance to Recent Inquiries

Community Based Bushfire Management is an approach to working with community to reduce bushfire risk which addresses many of the findings and recommendations of the Victorian Auditor General Office (VAGO) Report, the Inspector General for Emergency Management (IGEM) Inquiry Report and the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements Report (2019/20).

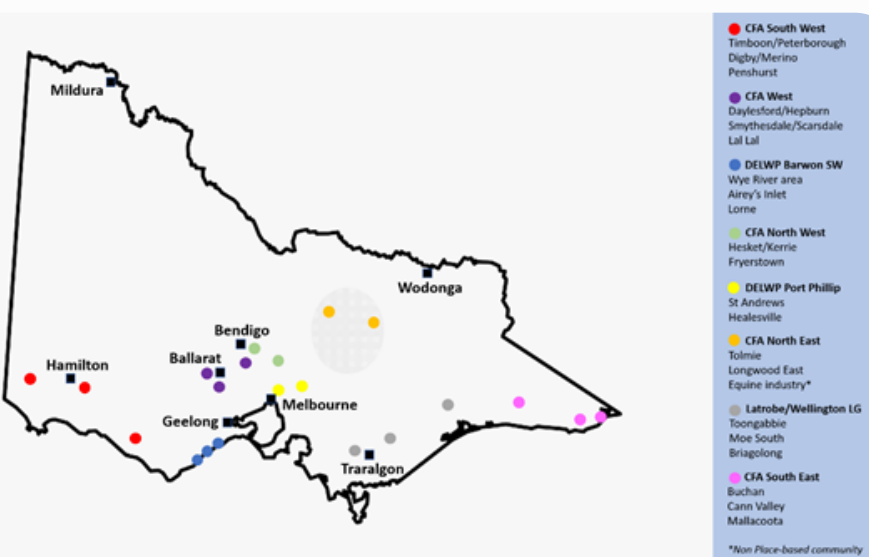
These inquiries, and others, discuss the need to put community at the centre of planning, preparedness, response and recovery work undertaken within the sector. These recommendations touch on personal preparedness, community-level preparedness (eg. fuel management) and other aspects of risk reduction, such as:

Royal Commission Recommendation 10.1

State and territory governments should continue to deliver, evaluate and improve education and engagement programs aimed at promoting disaster resilience for individuals and communities.

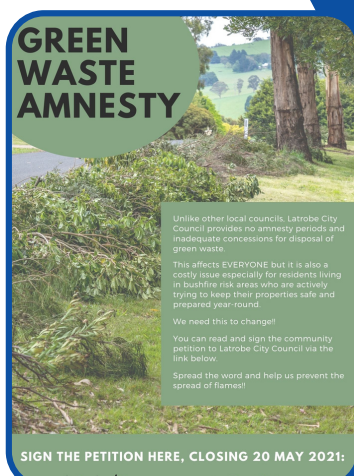
IGEM Recommendation 10

The Inspector-General for Emergency Management recommends that Emergency Management Victoria – in accepting that emergency management is a **'shared responsibility'** – collaborate with the emergency management sector and community to: a) establish clear guidance that clarifies the roles and responsibilities of individuals, communities, the private sector, responder agencies and government before, during and after emergencies b) develop, implement and evaluate an ongoing communications strategy that ensures these roles and responsibilities are well-understood and reiterated throughout the year.



Latrobe Green Waste Petition

A Moe South resident mobilised the Latrobe community to advocate for a review of the current council green waste disposal system, lobbying for greater support for residents in high bushfire risk areas.



Moe South Clean Up

The Moe South community came together over the 2020 Melbourne Cup Weekend to help each other clean up their properties prior to the fire season.

'I was very grateful for that weekend, because I'd been widowed for 10 years some of the things on my property had got a bit beyond me. So lucky to have [them] come—they were so wonderful. Helped me get on with other tasks, to have the council facilitate the taking away of green waste – which was a lot, so excellent.' (community member)



Timboon Neighbourhood Safer Place

Working closely with local government, local CFA brigades, the community and CFA Communications, an important project was undertaken in Timboon, South West Victoria. This project included the creation of new NSP signage, as well as work with the community to improve local understanding of the role of an NSP.

'... the brigade is the shining light in the community, and when the commander asked why, the captain said it was because of the support provided by me and the CBBM group—investing that time.'

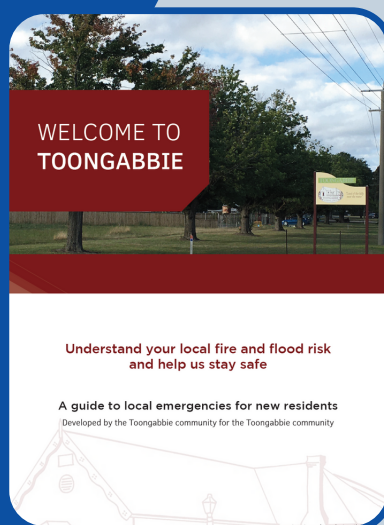


Working together to support community voices and complex choices

Toongabbie Welcome Packs

A group of local residents and a graphic designer came together to prepare welcome packs for new residents in the area.

'[The launch] went really well, with some new residents in vulnerable positions who were unaware of past fires, and also interested in the floods' (community leader)



Briagolong Film Festival

As part of the annual short film festival, the Briagolong community competed to make short films about bushfires in the area.



Mallacoota Fuel Management Plan

Concerned residents came together with agency staff to discuss fuel accumulation in the area and to prepare fuel management plans.

'The community knows how to live in this space and what is important to them. It's a long conversation that's built on knowledge about why things burn and how to protect them, while enjoying the bush and what it gives to us' (community leader)



Some partners over the years

- Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (Forest Fire Management Victoria)
- Country Fire Authority
- Local Government Areas
- Neighbourhood Houses
- Parks Victoria
- Bush nursing centres and community health organisations
- Landcare Network
- Hancock Victoria Plantations, water authorities and catchment management authorities
- Schools, playgroups and kindergartens
- Victoria Police
- Regional Roads Victoria
- VicTrack
- Local Koori groups
- Men's Sheds
- Lions Clubs and Rotary Clubs
- Save the Children
- Red Cross
- Local Traders' (and Tourism) Associations

CBBM in local government contexts

The CBBM project overlaps with a range of other Council projects and priorities, enabling collaboration with business units such as:

- Community development
- Local laws
- Emergency management
- Environment and waste/resource recovery
- Built environment and roads
- Arts, culture and recreation
- Planning

An example of this collaborative work is the Macedon Ranges Council Arts and Culture team working with CBBM to host disaster preparedness and chainsaw training for local women.

