



Lancefield-Cobaw Fire - October 2015

**Report of Community Observations
and Response to Independent
Investigation Auxiliary Report**

FINAL JANUARY 2016

Working in conjunction
with Communities,
Government, Agencies
and Business.

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Introduction

Background

The Southern Australia Seasonal Bushfire Outlook 2015-16 (released in September 2015) indicated an above normal fire season for Victoria with a strong likelihood that the season would begin early. These predictions were fulfilled in early October 2015, with Victoria's hottest start to spring.

The Lancefield planned burn was ignited by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) on 30 September 2015 and escaped containment lines on 3 October 2015. The fire was brought under control by DELWP and Country Fire Authority (CFA) firefighters over the next two days but flared up again as a result of the unprecedented hot, windy conditions experienced across Victoria on 6 October 2015.

The bushfire was contained on Tuesday 13 October 2015. It burnt over 3000 hectares and destroyed several dwellings, numerous sheds and many kilometres of fencing. It impacted on lifestyles, livestock and livelihoods and caused considerable economic and social upheaval in the surrounding communities.

There was a significant multi-agency response to the bushfire, as well as a large scale relief and recovery operation. Over 15 emergency management organisations were involved in these activities, including responder agencies, recovery agencies, Macedon Ranges Shire Council, Neighbourhood House, Victorian Council of Churches, utilities, local businesses and many other government and non-government organisations.

On 8 October, Minister for Environment and Climate Change Lisa Neville requested an independent investigation into the fire. The investigation was led by an external, independent expert, Murray Carter, Director of Western Australia's Office of Bushfire Risk Management. The Independent Investigation Terms of Reference had a specific scope and focus on DELWP.

The Independent Investigation Team provided Emergency Management Victoria (EMV) with the community observations relating to 'out-of-scope' matters captured during their investigation, which was released without edits at Lancefield on 19 November 2015. This *Lancefield-Cobaw Fire – October 2015: Report of Community Observations and Response to Independent Investigation Auxiliary Report* ("Community Report") represents EMV and the sector's commitment to sharing, exploring and addressing these community observations. This Community Report documents the issues raised by community members and outlines treatment options.

Irrespective of the cause, bushfires in the Victorian context can be highly destructive and volatile. The destruction caused by the Lancefield-Cobaw Fire is a timely reminder that bushfire risk is not restricted to the traditional fire danger period and requires a holistic approach to emergency management. Unfortunately, the Lancefield-Cobaw Fire is likely to be the first of numerous emergencies that impact the Victorian community over the 2015-16 summer period.

Bushfire safety is a shared responsibility between the government, agencies, business and the community. Bushfire safety involves effective planning and preparation prior to a fire, making informed decisions during the event, and having access to a range of safety options, in particular places to shelter from the effects of the fire. All Victorians, no matter where they live, must understand the bushfire risk and undertake measures to mitigate their own exposure to it.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to document the issues that have been raised by the community in response to the Lancefield-Cobaw Fire that fall outside the terms of reference of the Investigation Report and describe the proposed treatments for addressing those issues.

Operational Context

Lancefield-Cobaw Fire

The Lancefield-Cobaw Croziers Track planned burn was conducted by DELWP in the Macedon Ranges Shire in spring 2015. The 266ha burn was located approximately 10km west north west of the town of Lancefield. The burn was ignited on Wednesday 30 September 2015. It breached containment lines on Saturday 3 October and was brought under control overnight with approximately 70 additional hectares burnt. Further breaches of containment lines occurred on Tuesday 6 October and control of the bushfire was transferred from the Midlands District to the Gisborne Incident Control Centre (ICC) that afternoon.

The bushfire was contained on Tuesday 13 October after burning over 3000 hectares. The bushfire caused significant social, economic and environmental impacts on the Lancefield area and surrounding communities. It destroyed several dwellings, numerous sheds, significant numbers of livestock, many kilometres of fencing, flora and fauna.

State Strategic Control Priorities

The State Strategic Control Priorities provide clear direction on the factors that must be considered and actioned during the response to any emergency. These are critical to understanding the principles underlying operational decisions made during emergency response.

The State Emergency Response Plan (SERP – Emergency Management Manual Victoria Part 3) defines the State Strategic Control Priorities, which underpin the planning and operational decisions made when managing the response to emergencies.

The intent is to minimise the impacts of emergencies and enable affected communities to focus on their recovery as early as practicable.

The priorities are:

- Protection and preservation of life is paramount - this includes:
 - Safety of emergency services personnel; and
 - Safety of community members, including vulnerable community members and visitors/tourists located within the incident area
- Issuing of community information and community warnings detailing incident information that is timely, relevant and tailored to assist community members make informed decisions about their safety
- Protection of critical infrastructure and community assets that support community resilience
- Protection of residential property as a place of primary residence
- Protection of assets supporting individual livelihoods and economic production that supports individual and community financial sustainability
- Protection of environmental and conservation assets that considers the cultural, biodiversity and social values of the environment.

The State Strategic Control Priorities will be referenced throughout this document to provide context around community observations where relevant.

Review Process

Formal Investigation

On 8 October, the Minister for Environment and Climate Change, Hon Lisa Neville MP, requested an independent investigation into the fire and for findings to be provided to DELWP within three to four weeks.

The investigation was led by an external, independent expert, Mr Murray Carter, Director of Western Australia's Office of Bushfire Risk Management to examine all aspects of the planned burn and what happened once it began.

The scope of the investigation was to establish the facts and the circumstances relating to the Lancefield-Cobaw fire, including making findings in relation to:

- the adequacy of planning and resourcing of the 'Lancefield-Cobaw Croziers Track' planned burn (the planned burn)
- the appropriateness of the weather and other conditions for conduct of the planned burn on 30 September 2015
- what caused the planned burn to break containment lines on 3 October 2015 and on 6 October 2015
- decision making, management and control of the planned burn, including the adequacy of the patrol strategy adopted following its ignition
- the adequacy of communication with the community in the lead up to the planned burn and after it broke containment lines

The investigation team extensively consulted with the community, through community meetings, one-on-one meetings, and feedback provided via email. More than 100 submissions were received from the community and stakeholders as part of the investigation. The investigation team worked closely with a representative of the Lancefield community to ensure landowners had the opportunity to share their concerns.

The Independent Lancefield-Cobaw Fire Investigation Team delivered their final report to the Secretary of DELWP within three weeks of the commencement of the investigation. The *Independent Investigation of the Lancefield-Cobaw Fire Report* ("Investigation Report") was released in Lancefield on 19 November 2015. DELWP accepted all 22 recommendations in the Investigation Report, and has commenced implementing the recommendations as outlined in the *Response to the Recommendations of the Independent Investigation into the Lancefield-Cobaw Fire* ("DELWP Investigation Response").

Community observations relating to 'out-of-scope' matters

The Terms of Reference under which the Independent Investigation of the Lancefield-Cobaw Fire was conducted had a specific scope and focus on DELWP. Given the clear scope and strong focus of this investigation on input from the community, it was inevitable that significant information would arise outside of the Terms of Reference for the investigation. Given the escape of the planned burn resulted in a multi-agency emergency response over many days, in the course of the investigation issues were noted that fell outside the investigation remit.

As agreed early in the investigation process, the Independent Investigation Team provided EMV with the community observations relating to 'out-of-scope' matters that they captured during their investigation. The material provided to EMV from the Independent Investigation Team was released without edits in the *Issues not within the Terms of Reference* ("Auxiliary Report") at Lancefield on 19 November 2015.

Following the release of the Auxiliary Report, EMV worked with the Lancefield Neighbourhood House to organise a session to discuss the issues raised in the Auxiliary Report with a small number of community members from the Lancefield area. This session allowed for a greater

understanding of the context around the issues being raised and identification of additional topics for exploration. Further observations from the community have also been captured and explored. EMV will return to the Lancefield community to discuss the outcomes of this report.

This *Lancefield-Cobaw Fire – October 2015: Report of Community Observations and Response to Independent Investigation Auxiliary Report* (“Community Report”) represents EMV’s commitment to sharing, exploring and addressing these community observations. This Community Report documents the issues raised by community members. In many cases, observations relate to an ongoing area of work where they will be used to inform future developments and planned actions. The report also outlines treatment options, which are suggestions for addressing gaps in performance or sustaining good practice. From these, an action plan will be developed in consultation with the relevant organisations based on risk, appropriateness, strategic fit, and resource capability. This will ensure that the insights lead to real action that creates lasting behaviour change. The Inspector-General for Emergency Management (IGEM) will play a key role in the assurance of this process.

In addition to the specific treatment options outlined in this report, the community observations from both the *Investigation Report* and *Auxiliary Report* will be incorporated into established sector continuous improvement processes designed to capture issues and lessons across the state from fires and other emergencies.

Victoria’s approach to continuous improvement

Each year, the Victorian emergency management sector undertakes review and evaluation activities to better inform emergency management planning and improvement. There is a particular focus following each summer season to ensure that any issues experienced operationally and within the community relating to the response to an emergency are identified.

In line with new arrangements introduced in July 2014 under the *Emergency Management Act 2013*, Victoria is adopting a new approach to learning and improvement. This continuous improvement approach supports the emergency management sector’s shared goal of creating a sustainable and efficient emergency management system that reduces the likelihood, effect and consequences of emergencies.

Consistent with national and international lessons management principles, the Victorian sector focuses on identifying best practice and opportunities for improvement to develop actions to address these lessons and incorporate them into emergency management activities across the sector.

A two year improvement cycle provides a consistent, transparent and flexible approach to identifying and learning lessons to create real and lasting cultural and behavioural change. The outputs of this approach are designed to address and improve processes, procedures and performance. EMV facilitates this process in conjunction with and on behalf of Victoria’s emergency management sector through the State Review Team¹.

The observations collected from the community in relation to the Lancefield-Cobaw Fire, as described in this Community Report, will be combined with other information from various sources to provide broader insights into operational practice and community impacts. Trends across multiple emergencies will be identified. Trends and insights will be used to determine required actions, influence training, guide planning processes and develop learning products to share the experience with others. This will ensure that the insights lead to real action that creates lasting behaviour change.

¹ The State Review Team is the overarching leadership group that provides guidance and coordination of review, debrief, monitoring, lessons management activities and performance improvement across the emergency management sector.

Summary of Community Observations

Theme 1: Response and recovery

Community meetings and information

Community members observed that community meetings were generally considered as having great value. However, in some cases the tone of the presenters could have been improved and information provided was more general than expected by landowners. Landowners also reported a lack of contact from official government representatives about the loss of property, with some finding out through neighbours or reports in the newspaper.

There was a general feeling of genuine concern that lessons from the past have not been learned and landowners were keen to see real change into the future. It was not clear to landowners that changes have been implemented since previous escaped burns in the area. One couple requested a genuine apology because of the impacts of multiple similar incidents over the past two decades.

Response:

At the release of the *Investigation Report* and *DELWP Investigation Response* to the community, the DELWP Secretary and other government representatives publicly apologised for the impacts caused by the Lancefield-Cobaw fire. Planned burning is intended to reduce risk of bushfires and in this instance the fire broke containment lines and destroyed property and other values important to the community. As an emergency management sector, we all deeply regret what occurred as a result of this escaped planned burn.

Community meetings are critical before, during and after an emergency to share information and listen to the community. However, there may be a need to clarify what information is provided in which forums (e.g. community meetings vs information points) and provide further training to agency personnel likely to be running community meetings. The official communication and notification processes for informing impacted landowners of property losses is not well defined and could also be improved.

It is often the case that it is not clear what improvements have been made in response to past incidents. Any changes implemented in response to the *Investigation Report* and the *Community Report* will be monitored and publically reported to ensure ongoing confidence in the review process. IGEM will play a key role in this assurance process, as defined in *DELWP Investigation Response* (p. 7).

EMV, in collaboration with the sector, is currently implementing a new multi-agency approach to identifying and learning from lessons, as described in the *Investigation Report*. This will allow the sector to be able to better show why changes have been made and what outcome this has produced. EMV, in collaboration with the sector, is committed to further develop these initiatives and further their application, consistent with the direction of the *Investigation Report* (p. 6).

Insurance

Community members reported feeling confused and uncertain about insurance procedures. This was exacerbated by confusing or conflicting information from DELWP assessors regarding the right of landowners to make claims on DELWP (either directly or indirectly through their own insurers) in circumstances where private insurers had commenced assessing damage. In some cases, reports in the media and comments from government representatives did not reflect the experiences of some community members, particularly in relation to timeframes and level of community contact.

There were also concerns about the conduct of insurance assessors, including perceptions of being uncaring, asking invasive questions, and unfair burden of proof of purchase by DELWP's insurance assessors, particularly as documents had been destroyed in fire. In some cases, insurance

assessments did not acknowledge or identify the values that were important to the community, for example private forests (discussed further in Theme 2).

Many landowners raised concerns with the time taken for insurance assessments to be processed. In some cases, the ability of the community to rehabilitate their land or further prepare for bushfires was impacted by the length of time for insurance claims to be processed.

Fence repair and replacement was acknowledged as having commenced swiftly. However, owners of de-stocked land who were selling their properties requested confirmation that they would be included on the replacement program to have their damaged fences repaired.

Response:

In the aftermath of an emergency, the process of insurance assessment can be challenging and overwhelming for community members who have lost property or possessions. There are a number of avenues for support, including through the Recovery Centre, DELWP personnel and free legal aid.

DELWP's insurance business unit responded swiftly to the burn by basing a team member at the emergency relief centre to ensure that claims arising from the Lancefield fire were dealt with sensitively, quickly and effectively. Details about property and other losses from the fire were collected from affected community members and arrangements were made for them to be contacted as soon as possible by insurance assessors appointed on behalf of DELWP and the Victorian Managed Insurance Authority (VMIA). In the period since the fire, DELWP staff provided a range of information, including a Lancefield-Cobaw Fire Insurance information fact sheet, available at <http://delwp.vic.gov.au/fire-and-emergencies/lancefield>.

The government-appointed assessors have extensive experience working in partnership with property owners during the difficult period immediately following property losses. The assessors' role is to work with affected community members throughout the recovery process to help assess and prepare insurance claims, a process which includes seeking, where available, supporting documents such as inventories and receipts. Non-government insurance assessors responding to privately held insurance policies have also been working with the owners of property impacted by the Lancefield-Cobaw Fire.

DELWP will pass general comments relating to interactions between community members and assessors to the VMIA to ensure that claims are dealt with sensitively, quickly and effectively. Since the fire, DELWP has asked Victorian Council of Churches to speak to their assessors about how to talk to communities after an emergency.

Advice and services are also offered by Victoria Legal Aid, Disaster Legal Help and Insurance Council of Australia to people affected by emergencies and disasters, including free legal advice about rights and claims, support for insurance assessment processes and assistance in addressing any issues or complaints about insurer's actions or policies. It may be useful to ensure this information is shared more broadly in areas impacted by emergencies.

Following the Lancefield-Cobaw Fire, DELWP will pay full restoration costs of boundary and internal fences damaged by bushfire or by machinery used by fire agencies to control the bushfire. Fence repair and replacement is conducted in line with the *Victorian Government Repair of Fences Damaged by Bushfire and Fire Control Line Rehabilitation Policy*, available at <http://www.depi.vic.gov.au/fire-and-emergencies/recovery-after-an-emergency/fences-control-lines-and-essential-water-after-bushfire>.

While state government insurance response for any particular fire event will depend on the specific circumstances, the experience of community members suggests that there is an opportunity to improve the processes of insurance assessment to make it more transparent, streamlined, and effectively communicated in the future.

Skills and experience of firefighters

A number of highly experienced CFA Volunteer Brigade members reported concerns about the changing skills of volunteer brigade members as older experienced brigade members retired to be replaced by younger less experienced people, often from an urban background. This may have contributed to reports that there were differences in resource capabilities at the incident, where some CFA resources were comfortable supporting DELWP crews fighting running fire amongst tall forest and thick understorey, whereas other crews waited for fire to spread to pastures in line with their capability.

Local landowners reported that the current incident management culture may not adequately acknowledge and support local discretion and timely decision making. This may have been influenced by the need for improved information flow from the fire ground to incident management roles, which is consistent with many complex and dynamic emergency situations. Local landowners also raised concerns that local knowledge could have been more effectively used in response operations and that information flow between some DELWP and CFA resources could have been improved.

Response:

Volunteer sustainability is acknowledged as a crucial issue for CFA and other volunteer based organisations. Furthermore, skill retention is challenging for many organisations, including all emergency management organisations with aging workforce demographics. EMV supports all Victorian volunteer based emergency management organisations through a range of programs, including the Volunteer Consultative Forum, Valuing Volunteers Program and the Strategic Priorities for Emergency Management Volunteering in Victoria. CFA also has a range of programs to support, sustain and grow their volunteer base.

Everyone has a different understanding of what is safe, which is heavily shaped by the context of past experiences. There will always remain a tension between crew safety and the ability to aggressively attack fire, while also working within the skills level of individuals and crews. The State Strategic Control Priorities state that "Protection and preservation of life is paramount – this includes: safety of emergency services personnel, and safety of community members including vulnerable community members and visitors / tourist located within the incident area". The focus on the primacy of life is critical for all responders and community members to understand and apply.

CFA and DELWP, along with other emergency management partners, work together closely to share expertise, knowledge and lessons. Collaboration between CFA and DELWP, along with a range of other emergency management organisations, has increased substantially over the past 10 years.

However, there is opportunity to support further collaboration between all fire services, particularly in understanding how expertise in one context relates to other contexts. Improving the capabilities of responder agencies in different operational contexts is being addressed in a range of ways and will continue to be advanced across the sector. For example, the CFA Planned Burning Program allows CFA members the opportunity to be involved in planned burns, providing greater experience and confidence in vegetation fires and backburning. This was also addressed in the *DELWP Investigation Response*, which committed to "collaborate with CFA on better approaches to develop skills and build Victoria's overall capability and capacity in fire management" (p. 7).

EMV and the fire agencies are also working to improve information flows within and across agencies, particularly from fireground to incident management, including the implementation of the Intelligence function and development of technology to support a common operating picture. This will further support the use of local knowledge to inform planning and response activities.

Traffic management (or road blocks)

Many community members expressed concern and frustration at traffic management procedures. These experiences included:

- Landowners who would have confidently stayed to defend their properties subsequently faced restrictions in returning to their properties.
- Landowners who bypassed police roadblocks through alternative routes that posed higher risks than the closed public roads.
- Landowners who were not able to return to their properties to retrieve pets before the bushfire risk escalated due to early, pre-emptive establishment of roadblocks (sometimes many hours).
- Landowners who successfully stayed and defended their properties who were informed they could not come back through the roadblocks immediately after the fire if they left to get supplies (e.g. food, fuel) or attend medical appointments.
- Landowners not provided the opportunity to see if their property had been destroyed, while media were escorted through the area.
- Wildlife rescuers were restricted from entering the fire impact area for several days, which limited their ability to rescue injured fauna.
- Landowners who encountered problems with moving private firefighting vehicles between properties due to a police roadblock (Note: this point was raised in reference to an earlier experience at a fire during 2014, not the 2015 Lancefield-Cobaw Fire).

Landowners also made a range of comments about the conduct of personnel at the traffic management points, including that they did not have discretion to make local decisions, were ill-informed about local conditions, and did not know the local road networks.

While the risks to people travelling through fire impacted areas was acknowledged, landowners reported that more flexible and workable arrangements are needed to balance the risks and opportunities. In some cases, there needed to be a more timely review of access levels or position of traffic management points. Landowners emphasised the need to acknowledge that there are often genuine reasons to move through the fire impacted areas, there may be special cases for movement through these areas and there is a priority of needs (e.g. firefighters, landowners defending property, all landowners, media).

Response:

The management of traffic through an area impacted by an emergency is a significant ongoing issue with no easy solution. This topic has been the focus of much debate and consideration over many years. It is a balance of safety for road users, landowners and the broader community.

Traffic Management Points (TMPs) are established to regulate the flow of road traffic into an area where an emergency has occurred, is presently occurring, or has the potential to occur. Controlling access to an area during the response to an emergency has been recognised as a key step in reducing the potential risk to the public, especially in terms of vehicles accessing and driving through an area experiencing emergencies. The *Guidelines For The Operation Of Traffic Management Points During Class 1 Emergencies* state that "Victoria Police and all emergency services acknowledge that, for a number of reasons, travel through an area where an emergency is occurring can be dangerous and potentially fatal; therefore, such travel should be both controlled and minimised where possible".

Victoria has a set of arrangements and guidance documents that relate to traffic management, with four different levels of access possible to support flexible management and timely deactivation. The arrangements allow for discretion of TMP staff and recognise the importance of community welfare, animal welfare, and landowner access (e.g. use of wristbands). These arrangements are predicated on the principle of primacy of life, in line with the Strategic Control Priorities. As a result, the safety of emergency responders,

community members, and animal welfare personnel takes priority over all other considerations.

Nevertheless, the experiences of the community during the Lancefield-Cobaw Fire suggest that there are opportunities to improve in this area, including the application of the state arrangements, conduct of personnel, timeliness of de-escalation and positioning of traffic management points. Personnel who were positioned on traffic management points during the fire have also raised similar concerns and support further consideration of the application of the state arrangement for traffic management during emergencies.

While specific issues can be addressed in a piecemeal fashion (e.g. exploration of animal welfare personnel access, further education of traffic management point personnel), the findings of this incident require a broader consideration of the role of traffic management procedures, the underlying assumptions and how they are applied. EMV will review this issue over the summer period to inform ongoing improvement activities, in line with the state's approach to continuous improvement.

Personal fire plans

Some landowners reported that they were yet to complete preparation of personal fire plans for the coming bushfire season, impacting the ability to defend property (e.g. fire units undergoing essential maintenance). Other related issues (e.g. communications with adjoining landowners about planned burns, shifting stock during fires, identification of escape zones) will be addressed through recommendations in the Lancefield-Cobaw Fire Investigation Report.

Response:

Bushfire safety is a shared responsibility between the government and a range of stakeholders. However, individuals are ultimately responsible for making their own decisions about how to respond to the bushfire risk.

While October 2015 was Victoria's hottest start to spring, the Southern Australia Seasonal Bushfire Outlook 2015-16 (released in September 2015) indicated an above normal fire season for Victoria with a strong likelihood that the season would begin early. Therefore, this incident is a timely reminder that bushfire risk is not restricted to the traditional fire danger period and requires a holistic approach to emergency management.

Domestic water quality

One community member reported some concern about water taste and quality following the fire suppression and was concerned about potential health issues related to the use of aerial retardant.

Response:

Further information regarding the particular location of this concern would be necessary to provide a specific response. Nevertheless, fire retardants are used in firefighting operations across the world and have been used for the last thirty years in Victoria. The environmental impacts of aerial retardant have been reviewed by Environmental Protection Authority Victoria and DELWP.

The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) provide information and advice regarding fire retardants and health on their website. The DHHS Fire Retardants and Health Fact Sheet states that "risk assessments carried out in the United States and in Victoria demonstrated that the risk of health effects was very low, even to people who are accidentally exposed to the fire retardants during their application."

Macedon Ranges Council and DHHS also provide health advice about private water sources and access to tank cleaning and tank refill service after bushfires at [http://www.mrsc.vic.gov.au/Council the Region/News Media/Latest News/Water supplies following the CobawLancefield fires](http://www.mrsc.vic.gov.au/Council%20the%20Region/News%20Media/Latest%20News/Water%20supplies%20following%20the%20CobawLancefield%20fires) or <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/environment/bushfires-private-water-sources.htm>.

Theme 1: Response and recovery – Suggested treatments

Suggested Treatments	Level	Timeframe
Examine how information is provided to community members who have lost property and explore ways to improve communication and notification processes.	Strategic	Long term
Develop and implement a lessons management approach across the emergency management sector.	Strategic	Long term
Improve interactions between community members and assessors to ensure that claims are dealt with sensitively, quickly and effectively.	Tactical	Short term
Examine how insurance assessment process can be improved to be more transparent, streamlined, and effectively communicated.	Strategic	Long term
Provide education to traffic management personnel regarding the identified issues, including application of the state arrangements, conduct of personnel, timeliness of de-escalation and positioning of traffic management points.	Tactical	Short term
Review the application of traffic management arrangements over the summer period to identify actions to ensure continuous improvement.	Strategic	Long term

Theme 2: Landscape management

Landowners described a range of views relating to land management, including:

- Current land management policies do not align with community values
- Current policy is based on an assumption of the benefits of planned burning
- Planned burning impacts on biodiversity, flora and fauna
- There is a need to review fire management practices across the state
- There is a need to reconsider the management of the Cobaw forest
- Planning needs to consider public and private tenure
- There are competing values that influence public land management and use (e.g. environmental vs recreational use)
- There is an opportunity for scientific research to better inform land management practices.

Response:

These views are generally reflected in the *Investigation Report* and addressed by the *DELWP Investigation Response*. Furthermore, general concerns with planned burning are addressed in the *Review of performance targets for bushfire fuel management on public land* recently released by IGEM and the Victorian Government response to that report (titled *Safer together: A new approach to reducing the risk of bushfire in Victoria*).

Heavy woody fuels

A number of landowners requested access to felled fuels, including:

- trees along roadsides being felled as a fire suppression measure.
- trees leaning into private land from State Forests.

Response:

The collection of firewood from municipal roadsides is generally not approved due to environmental values and road safety concerns. However, firewood may be collected in the event of storm damage or wildfire. In this instance, a permit to collect firewood from a Municipal roadside should be obtained. For further information, refer to [http://www.mrsc.vic.gov.au/Council the Region/Laws Regulations/Firewood Collection](http://www.mrsc.vic.gov.au/Council%20the%20Region/Laws%20Regulations/Firewood%20Collection).

Trees leaning over from State Forest would be managed locally through DELWP, Parks Victoria and the local council. In the *DELWP Investigation Response*, DELWP have committed to “look for opportunities to make firewood that is produced during fire response and fuel management operations available to local communities” (p. 6).

Managing private forest

A number of landowners described the difficulties of managing the regeneration of private forests that had been subject to fire, particularly high intensity fire and those with overstorey deaths. Some landowners reported feeling they were left on their own to manage the rehabilitation of their private forests, a feeling exacerbated when seeing the level of resources being used to rehabilitate the public land in the area. Landowners requested assistance to manage private forests following planned burn escapes.

Response:

There are a range of support services provided by DELWP, Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources (DEDJTR), the Macedon Ranges Shire Council and other organisations to support community recovery, including support for

managing private forests. The Macedon Ranges Shire Council provides information regarding revegetating private property, including at http://www.mrsc.vic.gov.au/Waste_Environment/Land_Management/Revegetating_Your_Property. Landcare and other community groups also provide support to fire impacted landowners regarding recovery of bushland after fire. Further information can be accessed at <http://www.landcarevic.net.au/resources/for-land-managers/fire-recovery-resources-for-landholders>.

Since the fire, Macedon Ranges Shire and DELWP staff have been visiting specific bush block owners to provide advice about the rehabilitation of their natural environments. Landowners should contact the Macedon Ranges Shire Council for further information.

Catchment management

Landowners reported the need for a comprehensive post-fire land rehabilitation strategy, including private land, to include:

- Processes for recovering soil, timber and aesthetic values to the extent possible
- Remedial measures to protect water quality and soil erosion
- Restricting access to State Forest, particularly by motorcycles and four wheel drive vehicles, to support rehabilitation and minimise further environmental damage.

Response:

DELWP and its land management partners are currently conducting emergency stabilisation work to treat all control lines on private or public land, as they do after every emergency. DELWP also implement rehabilitation programs on public land that addresses many of these issues. Information about current rehabilitation programs and services is available at <http://www.depi.vic.gov.au/fire-and-emergencies/recovery-after-an-emergency/public-land-recovery>.

The Macedon Ranges Shire Council and DEDJTR provide advice and support for bushfire recovery relating to private property, farms, animals and soils. Further information can be found at <http://agriculture.vic.gov.au/agriculture/emergencies/recovery>. Since the fire, Macedon Ranges Shire and DELWP staff have been visiting specific bush block owners to provide advice about the rehabilitation of their natural environments. Landowners should contact Macedon Ranges Shire Council for local advice regarding land rehabilitation.

House and dwelling protection

Landowners expressed frustration at the restrictions on the amount of clearing permitted around houses, which they believed could increase the risk of damage to properties in the event of bushfire. This current system of set distances for tree and understorey vegetation clearing limits (i.e. 10/30 rule allowing any vegetation to be removed within ten metres of a dwelling and any vegetation excluding trees to be removed within 30 metres of a dwelling) was considered insufficient to adequately address bushfire risk and did not acknowledge the impact of vegetation heights. However, the impact on wildlife habitats was also raised as an important counterpoint when reviewing the vegetation clearance rules.

Furthermore, landowners reported that the adequacy of cleared vegetation zones is undermined by fibrous bark on trees that is likely to catch alight and contribute to ember attack during bushfires. Landowners requested assistance from government in removing the fibrous bark without damage to the trees.

Response:

The management of vegetation of private property is a complex issue with many differing considerations and opinions. The risk of bushfire needs to be balanced with the values considered important to the local community, including environmental, economic, cultural, and social (including safety).

Research shows that clearing vegetation around a house is one of the most important things property owners can do to help protect it from a bushfire. These planning controls are set by Victorian government policy and were introduced after the February 2009 Black Saturday bushfires.

Different rules apply in different municipalities and in different property locations. While the 10/30 rule allows any vegetation to be removed within 10 metres of a dwelling and any vegetation excluding trees to be removed within 30 metres of a dwelling, areas under the Bushfire Management Overlay can apply the 10/50 rule to clear all vegetation except trees up to 50 metres of a dwelling. Further information is provided at www.cfa.vic.gov.au/clearing or by contacting the local council.

Ember attack from fibrous bark is a major problem that can potentially contribute to house loss. CFA provides general advice about clearing vegetation and landscaping at <http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare/clearing-trees-and-vegetation/>. However, there may be an opportunity to provide more specific or localised support. Landowners should contact their local CFA District Office or local council for local advice regarding vegetation management.

The Victorian Government has committed to a range of actions to address the need for a risk based approach to fuel reduction across public and private land in response to the IGEM review documented in *Safer together: A new approach to reducing the risk of bushfire in Victoria*. More specifically, EMV has committed to “lead a State Bushfire Management Strategy to guide future investment in bushfire management across public and private land in Victoria” (p. 11). EMV will also continue to support local government, CFA, DELWP and VicRoads and other relevant emergency management organisations to better communicate with the community about the importance of defensible space and support the implementation of the 10/30 and 10/50 policy.

Road verge management

Landowners discussed the risks posed by heavy fuel loads along roads used as escape routes for last-minute evacuations, particularly with fuels likely to spot long distances. Road verge management policies can impact on the safety of community members moving along roads in fire prone areas when evacuating during a bushfire.

A risk management approach to managing road side fuels is required that considers the needs of residents to evacuate, including contingency plans.

Response:

The management of roadside fuels is a contentious issue that has been debated from multiple viewpoints over many years. Victorian Government policy emphasises that the protection of human life is paramount and leaving bushfire prone areas on days of heightened risk is the safest response option. As stated in the Bushfire Safety Policy Framework, “movement through a fire affected landscape on foot or in a vehicle is dangerous” (p.15) and “leaving once a fire has started may be an option in some circumstances but it is an inherently risky option” (p. 16).

As a result of the 'Black Saturday' bushfires of 2009, the Victorian Government introduced planning mechanisms to allow for a broad range of roadside works capable of reducing fire risk by enabling the removal of roadside vegetation along high fire risk roadsides without the need for a planning permit. If not appropriately managed, roadside vegetation can act as a wick that enables fire to travel through the landscape and impact on communities.

Community safety during bushfires is a consideration in the management of roadside vegetation. The risk of bushfire needs to be balanced with the values considered important to the local community, including environmental, economic, cultural, and social (including safety). Safety of road users before and after a fire is specifically addressed in:

- CFA Roadside Fire Management Guidelines
- CFA Roadside Fire Management Brochure

- VicRoads Road Bushfire Risk Assessment Guideline and Risk Mapping Methodology

At the local level, emergency management planning processes should consider evacuation routes. EMV is supporting a number of communities around the state to pilot a process for community-based emergency management planning. This project supports the development, adoption and implementation of a community based approach and framework in an emergency management context, enabling communities and organisations to better connect and support each other before, during and after emergencies. Local emergency management planning allows communities to better understand the interests and values of locals and visitors, whilst working in partnership with organisations to improve the management of risks.

In the *DELWP Investigation Response*, DELWP have committed to “work with VicRoads and local government to support better management of roadside vegetation” (p.6). Macedon Ranges Shire Council have also established a new program to address roadside vegetation management, including a request for state funding. The issue of roadside vegetation management is also referenced in the Victorian Government response to the IGEM review documented in *Safer together: A new approach to reducing the risk of bushfire in Victoria*.

This is a statewide issue that is broader than just fire. EMV will continue to pursue this issue in collaboration with all levels of government, agencies and departments and community to strike the right balance between what the community values, environmental factors and safety.

Theme 2: Landscape management – Suggested treatments

Suggested Treatments	Level	Timeframe
Explore how to better support and communicate with the community about the importance of defendable space and the implementation of the 10/30 and 10/50 policy.	Strategic	Long term
Capture and share good practice in relation to road verge management to strengthen consistency of approach across regions.	Strategic	Long term

(NB: Tactical level actions relating to landscape management aspects of the Lancefield Fire have commenced, as per the commitments made in the *DELWP Investigation Response*.)

Theme 3: Telecommunications

Telecommunications black spots

Many community members reported that the telecommunications in the area around the Lancefield-Cobaw fire are inadequate, including mobile phone coverage and internet access. This has significant safety implications, including challenges to accessing warnings and information with limited phone or internet coverage.

Mobile Black Spot Programme and National Broadband Network improvements will address some telecommunications issues in Lancefield and Kyneton. However, rural landowners, particularly in Benloch, had concerns this work would not improve the telecommunications in their area.

Response:

Mobile, internet and radio black spots are an important and ongoing issue in Victoria and across Australia. There are many areas where black spots have significant impact on community safety and resilience.

On behalf of the Victorian emergency management sector, EMV helped to develop a priority listing of mobile phone black spots for remediation in early 2015, which was submitted for consideration as part of the Australian Government's Mobile Black Spot Programme. EMV's input into the submission was community focused and evidence-based, concentrating on areas at highest risk of fire and flood and with little or no network coverage. On 25 June 2015, the Australian Government announced that it would fund 109 priority mobile phone black spots over three years. The total investment for the program totals \$385 million, with Victoria contributing \$21 million.

The Macedon Ranges Shire Council states on their website that a number of improvements to telecommunications in the area are planned, including:

- Rollout of the National Broadband Network across the Macedon Ranges, with the third round of rollouts commencing July 2015. Currently in the planning phase, this rollout will involve a mixture of technologies at various public and private locations.
- A new mobile tower in Pipers Creek (near Kyneton) funded by the federal and state government and Telstra through the Mobile Black Spot Programme, to be completed in three years from June 2015.
- Two new Telstra mobile towers approved in Lancefield (Lancefield Park) and Kyneton (Telstra exchange), both planned to be completed by June 2016.

A further \$60 million has been committed by the Federal Government for Round 2 of the Mobile Black Spot Programme, with the location selection process expected to start in early 2016. EMV will again play an important role in influencing the process of identifying priority locations, which may include black spots identified during this fire. Members of the public can also nominate locations that do not have mobile coverage (nomination forms can be accessed at <https://www.communications.gov.au/what-we-do/phone/mobile-services-and-coverage/mobile-black-spot-programme>).

Theme 3: Telecommunications – Suggested treatments

Suggested Treatments	Level	Timeframe
Residents of Lancefield and surrounding areas to nominate any black spot areas through the Federal Government website.	Tactical	Short term
Continue to influence the Mobile Black Spot Programme by providing advice about priority locations in relation to emergency risk.	Strategic	Long term

Theme 4: Economic impacts on residents

Losses and opportunity costs

Landowners raised a number of issues relating to short- or long-term economic losses, including:

- Immediate losses of burnt pasture for stock (although in this fire this aspect was reduced as much of the surrounding grass was still green enabling quick suppression by fire crews).
- Longer term losses of potential business opportunities based on environmental values, including organic agriculture from use of aerial retardant and eco-tourism ventures from damage to wilderness and spiritual values.
- Impact on capacity to sell land in the area for a year or so after bushfires due to loss of aesthetics and the “now obvious threat that bushfires posed to landowners”.

Response:

Unfortunately, it is very challenging to determine the value of lost opportunities after an emergency has impacted an area. The values that landowners and community members consider important are sometimes not consistent with those identified through insurance processes.

DELWP have committed to providing appropriate support to those members of the community that have suffered damage as a result of this fire. DELWP and its insurer, the Victorian Managed Insurance Authority (VMIA), are committed to responding to residents impacted by the Lancefield-Cobaw Fire, and resolving claims as quickly as possible. A range of services and advice are available through DELWP (e.g. DELWP website and Assistance and Support FAQs).

Advice and services are also offered by Victoria Legal Aid, Disaster Legal Help and Insurance Council of Australia to people affected by emergencies and disasters, including free legal advice about rights and claims, support for insurance assessment processes and assistance in addressing any issues or complaints about insurer’s actions or policies.

DEDJTR are responsible for providing emergency fodder through immediate relief assistance. Regional Development Victoria and Business Victoria (both part of DEDJTR) provide a range of support to businesses, including those impacted by bushfire at <http://www.business.vic.gov.au/disputes-disasters-and-succession-planning/plan-prepare-for-fires/bushfire-recovery>. Landowners should contact their local Regional Development Victoria Office or local council for advice regarding access to programs and services, as well as information about other government services, grants and contacts that may assist regional businesses and organisations.

Personal leave contribution by CFA volunteer brigade members

One person raised the issue of CFA Volunteer Brigade members who had taken annual leave from their jobs to attend the fires. It was felt by some that this placed a burden on volunteers and their families as the opportunity to have a family holiday had been reduced. Where a person worked for a government agency it was seen as fair that they be repaid their leave entitlements.

Response:

Victoria’s emergency management arrangements rely heavily on an integrated, highly trained, effectively deployed and optimally utilised volunteer workforce.

All employees are entitled to community service leave under the National Employment Standards, which provides employees with a right to be absent from work to engage in prescribed community service activities, such as emergency service duties and jury service.

Victorian Public Service employees have further entitlements for paid leave entitlements for voluntary emergency management activities (refer to the Victorian Public Service Workplace Determination 2012, Section 1 Part 6). Personnel should discuss these leave entitlements with their employer.

Business continuity costs for CFA volunteer brigade members

One of the CFA Volunteer Brigade members, a fencing contractor, was reported as having a commitment to a local farmer to complete fence repairs during the week he was attending the fire. To adhere to this commitment he employed someone else, at his own cost, to have the job finished.

Costs on individuals resulting from the fire should be considered within the overall compensation measures currently in place.

Response:

Victoria’s volunteer workforce is critical to the effective and efficient delivery of emergency management services to the community. The costs incurred by volunteers while responding to emergencies is an important issue that has been debated over many years, including during the Victorian Bushfire Royal Commission. The costs of volunteering, including the costs to employers and the self-employed, can be significant.

EMV and the emergency management sector also recognises the importance of supporting volunteers. EMV supports the Volunteer Consultative Forum, which developed the *Strategic Priorities for Emergency Management Volunteering in Victoria* (released October 2015, available on the EMV website). This document identifies the need for policy, systems and processes to reduce out-of-pocket expenses on volunteers.

Theme 4: Economic impacts on residents – Suggested treatment

Suggested Treatments	Level	Timeframe
Continue to examine the need for policy, systems and processes to reduce out-of-pocket expenses on volunteers.	Strategic	Long term

Theme 5: Culture and heritage

Aboriginal cultural heritage

One landowner was concerned about the damage to some potential Aboriginal cultural heritage sites (e.g. rocks) from impact of fire and containment works on their private land. This person was also concerned about impact of fire on cultural values on public land, including possible canoe trees and scar trees.

Response:

From the information provided, it is unclear whether this landowner was referring to registered Aboriginal cultural heritage values or those yet to be registered. The concern expressed by the landowner relates to the management of fire impacts and containment works on Aboriginal cultural heritage in this particular fire and more generally.

The Office of Aboriginal Affairs Victoria administers the Aboriginal Heritage Act 2006, which provides for the protection and management of Aboriginal cultural heritage in Victoria. The Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council is established by the Aboriginal Heritage Act to provide a state-wide voice for Aboriginal people and to advise the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs on issues relating to the management of Aboriginal cultural heritage. The Aboriginal Heritage Act establishes the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Register and requires that the discovery of Aboriginal cultural heritage places or objects on any public or private land be reported to the Heritage Registrar. Aboriginal cultural heritage on private and public land is protected under the Aboriginal Heritage Act regardless of whether it is registered or not.

At a local level, Registered Aboriginal Parties (RAPs) are the voice of Aboriginal people in the management and protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage in Victoria. If there is not yet a Registered Aboriginal Party established in a particular location, then it will be managed by the Office of Aboriginal Affairs. Landowners and land managers are responsible for the protection and management of Aboriginal cultural heritage site. Landowners who suspect a possible Aboriginal place or object on their land can access further information at <http://www.dpc.vic.gov.au/index.php/aboriginal-affairs/aboriginal-cultural-heritage/information-for-landowners/reporting-a-possible-aboriginal-place-or-object>.

Emergency response adheres to the principle of the primacy of life as defined by the State Strategic Control Priorities: "Protection and preservation of life is paramount – this includes: safety of emergency services personnel, and safety of community members including vulnerable community members and visitors / tourist located within the incident area". Managing and mitigating risk to cultural values occurs within the context of the strategic control priorities and focus on the primacy of life by all responders and community members.

If Aboriginal cultural heritage information is available, certain departments and agencies can access this to inform decision making and minimise the chance of damage to these sites, within the context of the state control priorities. For example, DELWP and CFA consider these values when developing plans and engaging with the community regarding planned burning activities. Impact assessment teams would also consider these values when reporting impacts after an emergency. As part of the CFA Koori Inclusion Action Plan (2014-2019), CFA have commenced a range of activities to improve engagement with local aboriginal communities and establish processes for brigades to access local information about culturally significant sites. Further work is required to ensure that processes for managing and potentially mitigating the impact of emergencies on cultural heritage values are widely understood by the emergency management sector.

Theme 5: Culture and heritage – Suggested treatment

Suggested Treatments	Level	Timeframe
Explore further education and promotion of information for the emergency management sector and the community regarding aboriginal cultural heritage values and implications for emergency management.	Strategic	Long term

Additional Observations and Initiatives

Observations regarding operational issues

Community members have raised a number of observations concerning operational aspects of the response to the escaped burn. These included:

- use of plant equipment
- location of control lines
- management of resources, including formation and management of strike teams
- operational decisions relating to aircraft support
- consistency in approach and processes in establishing and managing staging areas.

These issues will be raised with CFA and DELWP to review through their normal agency review processes.

Review of warnings

A Level 1 review was conducted on the warnings issued in relation to the Lancefield-Cobaw Fire. Community feedback indicated that some warning messages were not specific or timely. This review was conducted in line with established review procedures documented in the Public Information Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. A Level 1 review is small scale and specific - Focused on small or specific issues identified during an incident or through standard monitoring processes. The primary objective is to analyse or confirm an issue to determine if targeted improvement can be made.

Warning messages are disseminated to the community about emergency situations through an integrated warning system using multiple communication channels, including online, social media, emergency broadcasters, telecommunications networks, and the Victorian Bushfire Information Line. Of the 105 total warnings issued during the period of 3 - 18 October, 55 were found not to meet messaging requirements. Most were considered to have minor impacts, with five considered moderate impact and one considered major impact.

A number of positives were identified, including:

- Messages were updated in a timely manner throughout the management of the incident and the community was provided with regular updates of information
- Use of templates was generally consistent and efficient.

Areas for improvements included:

- Grammatical or spelling errors - 21 messages, one with major impact (Emergency Warning message with major grammatical issues that provided unclear instructions to the community)
- Jargon - 29 messages including operational jargon that the broader community would have little to no understanding
- Use of Community Update template - 19 Advice messages were issued when a community update would have been more appropriate.

To proactively address these issues, the EMV Public Information Team will provide a range of guidance to Public Information personnel regarding available tools and expectations of their role, including:

- Public Information Newsletter articles regarding proof reading, operational jargon and the use of Community Update templates
- Pre-Season refreshers for SCC warnings personnel highlighting guidance for the management and monitoring of warnings

- Reminder for the SCC Public Information team to undertake quality assurance of messaging and pro-actively liaise with Incident public information team to evaluate whether further resources are required to supplement local capability.

Review of Bushfire Protection Measures

As a result of the Lancefield-Cobaw fire, there was an opportunity to capture information about the bushfire protection measures for residential properties and document examples of house survival. The house survival factors considered included:

- House construction and site location
- Water supply and access
- Defendable space including garden maintenance and general housekeeping
- Resident risk awareness and preparedness levels (e.g. bushfire plan)
- Community warnings
- Method of defence (e.g. active vs passive).

The review team included EMV and CFA personnel with specialist expertise in community safety, vegetation management, and building safety. The review team visited nine sites, eight of which were within or immediately adjacent to the fire footprint. At each site, the review team took photos, recorded observations of the property and conducted informal interviews with property owners, where possible.

The review made a range of observations, including:

- Levels of clearing around all houses inspected were broadly consistent with the 10/30 and 10/50 rules for defendable space, which appeared to be generally effective for the type of fire intensity experienced during this event
- Fire intensity was at a level where houses were generally defendable with brigade intervention or active defence
- Without active defence, some houses are likely to have been destroyed due to their vulnerability to embers or proximity of combustible materials (e.g. garden mulch, storage of materials)
- Potential for higher fire intensity and more house losses if this fire had occurred in dryer conditions.

Additional Observations: Suggested treatments

Suggested Treatments	Level	Timeframe
Examine any agency-specific operational issues through the standard agency debriefing and review processes.	Tactical	Short term
Provide Public Information personnel with guidance that reinforces the expectations of their role and the tools available.	Tactical	Short term
On an ongoing basis, monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of emergency warnings disseminated over the summer period, in line with the Public Information Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.	Strategic	Long term
Capture and share key messages relating to residential bushfire protection measures and maximising the likelihood of house survival in bushfires.	Tactical	Short term

Conclusion

The Lancefield-Cobaw Fire had a significant impact on the community of Lancefield and surrounding areas. The fire burnt over 3000 hectares and destroyed several dwellings, numerous sheds and many kilometres of fencing. It impacted on lifestyles, livestock and livelihoods and caused considerable economic and social upheaval in the surrounding communities. We have sincere sympathy for those who were impacted as a result of the Lancefield-Cobaw Fire.

The purpose of this report is to document the issues that have been raised by the community in response to the Lancefield-Cobaw Fire that fall outside the terms of reference of the Investigation Report and describe the suggested treatments for addressing those issues. From these, an action plan will be developed in consultation with the relevant organisations based on risk, appropriateness, strategic fit, and resource capability. This will ensure that the insights lead to real action that creates lasting change.

In addition to the treatments described in this report, observations from the community in relation to the Lancefield-Cobaw Fire will be collated with trends from other emergencies to inform an ongoing continuous improvement cycle. In many cases, observations in this report relate to an ongoing area of work where they will be used to inform future developments and planned actions.

The process taken to examine this incident and engage the community has enabled issues to be discussed and questions to be explored. This Community Report represents EMV and the sector's commitment to sharing, exploring and addressing these community observations. There is an opportunity to learn how we can effectively capture community observations and maintain meaningful dialogue with community members before, during and after emergencies.

The destruction caused by the Lancefield-Cobaw Fire reinforces that bushfire risk is not restricted to the traditional fire danger period and requires a holistic approach to emergency management. Unfortunately, the Lancefield-Cobaw Fire is likely to be the first of numerous emergencies that impact the Victorian community over the 2015-16 summer period. We must all work together to learn as much as we can from every emergency and strive for a safer and more resilient Victoria.

Attachment 1 Further Information

Fire recovery information

The Macedon Ranges Shire Council has provided a range of information through the Recovery Officer, the recovery centre in Lancefield and the council website.

Further information:

[http://www.mrsc.vic.gov.au/Council the Region/News Media/Latest News/Fire recovery information](http://www.mrsc.vic.gov.au/Council%20the%20Region/News%20Media/Latest%20News/Fire%20recovery%20information)

Disaster recovery

Information is provided to assist people who've been affected by the bushfires in Macedon Ranges, Mitchell, Murrindindi and Surf Coast. This includes information about:

- the recovery centre,
- financial assistance,
- emotional health and wellbeing,
- information for farmers and
- road closures

Further information: <http://recovery.vic.gov.au/october-2015-bushfires>

Health

Bushfires have the potential to cause a number of environmental health concerns beyond the immediate damage caused by the fire. The Department of Health and Human Services provides a range of information relating to the potential impact of bushfires on community health.

Further information: <http://www.health.vic.gov.au/environment/bushfires.htm>

Support and assistance

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning will provide appropriate support to those members of the community that have suffered damage as a result of this fire.

Further information: <http://delwp.vic.gov.au/fire-and-emergencies/lancefield>

Caring for wildlife

Macedon Ranges Wildlife Network, DELWP staff and volunteers have assessed over 1500 wildlife since the Lancefield-Cobaw Fire. The Macedon Ranges Wildlife Network is keen to monitor private property for any injured wildlife, but needs permission from landholders before they can enter. If you have concerns about the health of wildlife on your property please contact 0476 158 080 and 0438 363 242.

Further information: <http://www.mrwn.org.au/in-an-emergency>

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Document approval

This document requires the following approval:

Name	Title	Organisation
Craig Lapsley	Emergency Management Commissioner	EMV

Audience

The audience for this document is the community members impacted by the Lancefield-Cobaw Fire to document the issues that have been raised by the community in response to the fire that fall outside the terms of reference of the Investigation Report and describe the suggested treatments for addressing those issues.

Reference material

References	TRIM ID/Location
<i>Independent Investigation of the Lancefield-Cobaw Fire Report</i>	http://delwp.vic.gov.au/fire-and-emergencies/lancefield
<i>Response to the Recommendations of the Independent Investigation into the Lancefield - Cobaw Fire</i>	http://delwp.vic.gov.au/fire-and-emergencies/lancefield
<i>Issues not within the Terms of Reference</i>	http://delwp.vic.gov.au/fire-and-emergencies/lancefield
<i>Safer Together: A New Approach to Reducing the Risk of Bushfire in Victoria</i>	http://www.delwp.vic.gov.au/safer-together
<i>Strategic Priorities for Emergency Management Volunteering in Victoria</i>	https://www.emv.vic.gov.au/our-work/volunteers-in-emergency-management/

Acronyms	Description
CFA	Country Fire Authority
DELWP	Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning
DEDJTR	Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Transport and Resources
DHHS	Department of Health and Human Services
EMV	Emergency Management Victoria
IGEM	Inspector-General for Emergency Management