

**Newsletter of the Dandenong Ranges Community Bushfire Group (DRCBG)**

**News Flash:**

- Donation of state of the art mass notification technology to DRCBG
- FREE Bushfire Preparedness Course at Swinburne Uni and CFA CFG courses
- 10/30 right – more info inside

**Individual Highlights:**

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## DRCBG : A group overview

The Dandenong Ranges Community Bushfire Group was formed after Black Saturday by 2 local residents, Mel Gajdek and Jo Hirst so that residents could have their opinions heard.

DRCBG aims to promote awareness and education of the risk of bushfires in the Dandenong Ranges. We also aim to assist group members and their dependants, with resource and information networks, access to up to date information, a forum to

discuss issues within the local community, and the power to lobby for causes that are of the utmost importance relating to bushfire safety issues.

We have 5 active sub groups working on projects that aim to make positive changes in our community relating to bushfire safety.

Sub groups are: Communication, Fuel Management, Education, Refuges and Bunkers and Early/Emergency Warning Systems.

Please let us know if you have any questions or issues that you think need addressing and we may be able to help. Jo Hirst and Mel Gajdek DRCBG Founders.



*The Dandenongs in January 1997:  
Four separate fires*

## Multi-National Corporation Hears The Call

In direct response to the bushfire threat that the Dandenong's face this summer, Federal Signal Corporation, a multi-national public warning specialist company has donated to DRCBG a mass notification system. This technologically advanced mass notification system capable of live voice streaming, suitable for the high risk "gap area", identified in the Sassafras village where no existing audible notification is heard presenting a current and foreseeable risk to residents, tourists and businesses, claimed Ms Gajdek.

Arising from a community survey of over 800 residents undertaken by DRCBG in the wake of the Black Saturday, Upper Ferntree Gully,

Belgrave and Upwey Fires last Summer, an audible warning system was nominated in the "top 5" survey response.

"The Federal Government text and landline messages (NEWS) is based on home addresses and will not reach tourists visiting the Dandenong's or those residents with no mobile reception." said Ms Gajdek.

Ms Hirst went on to say: "The live voice capabilities of the advanced mass notification system have potential to save time and lives in an emergency situation.

The potential for a devastating fire on a non Total Fire Ban Day in the

Dandenong's is high- as history showed last season with the Terry's Ave fire.

CFA's Chief Fire Officer Russell Rees, acknowledged that the "The Dandenongs dodged a bullet on Black Saturday." With a technologically advanced mass notification system, the Dandenong's will at least be far better prepared this summer" Ms Hirst concluded.

DRCBG has asked support of Premier Brumby, CFA and Local Government to collaborate in the implementation of a pilot system to showcase the technologies available to other high risk areas, especially tourist destinations, in gap areas not within an audible range of a current CFA siren.

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### **!! NEW WEBSITE !!**

**We will be moving from our current forum style website, to a funky new Website to be launched shortly. Stay tuned...**

[www.drcbg.org.au](http://www.drcbg.org.au)

**Special thanks to Mark, Dave, Richard and our Swinburne Uni students for their assistance.**

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***"DRCBG – caring for people, places and environment."***



At Emerald Community Cabinet:  
L-R, Cr Noel Cliff, Jo Hirst, Mayor Len Cox, Cr Samantha Dunn, Mel Gajdek

## **Sub Groups Report**

**Education:-** educational flyers promoting safety messages in the works; CFG push for the community, plans to help the CFA to be discussed shortly and Building good relationships with local CFA

**Communication:** Waiting on the rollout of new CFA material, including the website; SP Aus net approached about underground powerlines in the hills, they are reviewing

**Fuel Management:**  
- submitted numerous questions / ideas to council regarding roadsides and waste management options; feedback to DSE regarding their Fire Operations Plan

**EWS:**  
- positive step forward with contact of the OESC's Joe Buffone, to Federal Signals  
- plans to demonstrate to OESC and CFA our donated mass notification system; have had a pole donated , details TBC

**Refuges and Bunkers:**  
- OEFAAA made history getting the Olinda Community House put forward to the CFA as the 1st NSP ( Neighbourhood Safer Place). Currently being assessed. ; working with the relevant agencies to ensure community consultation in the new TPP's ( township protection plans) and NSP's; Australian standards for private bunkers

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## **General DRCBG Community Activites Report**

Four Swinburne uni students as a part of the Workplace Integrated learning project have been working with us to get a new website, a marketing plan and some general social community research. Thanks Chris, Dan, Jay and Shatay ☺

We are also in talks with a local community organisation to help the elderly / low income local residents for low cost property fuel removal.

We are also trying to get a sub group in the Emerald

district up and running to cover issues of Cardinia Shire Council.

Our incorporation is nearly complete. So far 12 nominations for committee - stay tuned!

We strive to have constant communication with the CFA Region 13, Local Council, DSE and other agencies to get answers, discuss issues etc.

Our media coverage continues in The Age, The Free Press Leader and the

Ranges Trader mail and Knox Journal. Some great articles and photos!

Working on some sponsorship from local businesses / organisations to get some funding for community based bushfire safety projects and general group activities.

**Any questions not answered tonight, please let us know, so we can pass queries on to the relevant person on your behalf.**

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## **Important Dates for your calendar**

*Community Safety Expo and Emergency Services Day*

To be held at Lillydale Lake on **Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> November 2009. 10am – 3pm**

Mark McGuire 1300 368 333

*The Dandenongs' Garden Festival – Inspiring in Spring* from Sept 12 – October 18  
[www.inspiringinspring.com.au](http://www.inspiringinspring.com.au)

*Selby Spring Arts Festival*  
Carlotta Tye Memorial Church  
October 23, 24 and 25 - music, art and craft, flowers, Devonshire

teas, chamber music recital on the Sunday afternoon

*Swinburne Bushfire Preparedness Pilot Program*

Sessions are: 8th October 7 pm— 9 pm, and 10th October 9 am—4 pm, 11th October 9 am—4pm (You must attend all sessions)

To register Phone: 9726 1756  
E-mail: [esti@swin.edu.au](mailto:esti@swin.edu.au)

*CFA Free Community Fireguard Courses (for CFG members)*

7 hour courses – Contact CFA

Community Fireguard Co-ordinator for Region 13 Helen Wositzky on Ph 8739 1300 for more information

"Bushfires, Vegetation and your garden" at Emerald Hall , Corner Main Street and Emerald-Beaconsfield Rd., EMERALD on the 24th September (7-10pm) and the 18th October ( 2-5pm) by Dr. G Moore (Melb Uni)

RSVP 03 5968 4140 or Ed Chatwin Councillor for Ranges Ward, Cardinia Shire on E-mail: [neddychat34@bigpond.com](mailto:neddychat34@bigpond.com)

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### **We need you!!**

**A Graphic designer good at schematics, and someone experienced in public relations... Contact Mel or Jo if you can help out. Free advertising on our new website can be offered as payment....**

# Information Links:

Following the recent Bushfires Royal Commission Interim report there have been changes to many policies such as:

~Introduction of the 10/30 right, which allows residents in designated areas increased vegetation clearing rights

[www.dse.vic.gov.au](http://www.dse.vic.gov.au) then choose "Fire & Env", then "Whats New" (Aug09)

DSE also have a great interactive mapping function on their website so you can view their current Fire Operations Plan for fuel reduction burns on public land. Choose on the DSE Home page, [Fire and Other Emergencies](#) > [Planned Burns](#) for more info.

Shire of Yarra Ranges council have just introduced one month's free green waste tipping, and a larger green waste bin for an extra \$15 per year. More info:

[www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au](http://www.yarraranges.vic.gov.au)

CFA website – great info and links at [www.cfa.vic.gov.au](http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au)

## Phone numbers

**Emergency (Police, Fire, Ambulance):** 000

**Victorian Bushfire Info Line:**  
1800 240 667

**SES:** 13 25 00

**Wildlife Rescue:**  
1300 094 737

**DSE:** 136 186

## DRCBG Contacts:

Until the establishment of our new website, personal email and phone numbers are used as contacts for group members.

Stay tuned for updates on our new website: [www.drcbg.org.au](http://www.drcbg.org.au) shortly which will include new emails

Until then:

Mel Gajdek:  
[melgajdek@y7mail.com](mailto:melgajdek@y7mail.com)

9755 2313

Jo Hirst:

[duncio31@aapt.net.au](mailto:duncio31@aapt.net.au)

Current website:  
[www.groups.yahoo.com/group/drcbg/](http://www.groups.yahoo.com/group/drcbg/)



Jo Hirst met PM Kevin Rudd at the Emerald Community Cabinet in May.

They discussed bushfire safety related issues such as emergency warnings, school refuge upgrades and the DRCBG community survey results .

# Thanks for your support !

Running a community group is hard and costly work – especially one like DRCBG where support has been overwhelming.

We have been able to secure a lot of peoples time and help at no cost, but phone, internet, printing, petrol and meeting organization costs money - out of our own pockets.

We would appreciate very much a gold coin donation towards the cost of tonight's meeting and to give to the Mt Dandenong Hotel. Let's support the venue that supports us – thanks to Mark and his team at the Mt D Hotel for their ongoing support. Please buy a drink or meal as well!

A great big thanks to all of our wonderful team who work tirelessly behind the scenes – especially our team leaders and website support people ☺ . We have a wealth of knowledge and experience behind us, and we couldn't do it without your support, guidance and passion. Thanks to each and everyone who has contributed.

Thanks to all of our great guest speakers tonight: Shane from DSE, Ray from CFA, John from SES, Doug from Vic Police, Fran, Christine and Jason who all made the time to be here and speak with us tonight ☺ . Our Mayor, Len Cox and Cr Cliff, as well as Brett Ellis who also work very hard for our community. Thank-you.



Some of our active group members in a recent photo:

Top L-R – Jeremy Francis, John Stevens, Janine Rigby, Don Orr, David Jewell, Bottom L-R Simon Begg, Mel Gajdek, Menzie and Elissa Jans, Jo Hirst with Charlie.