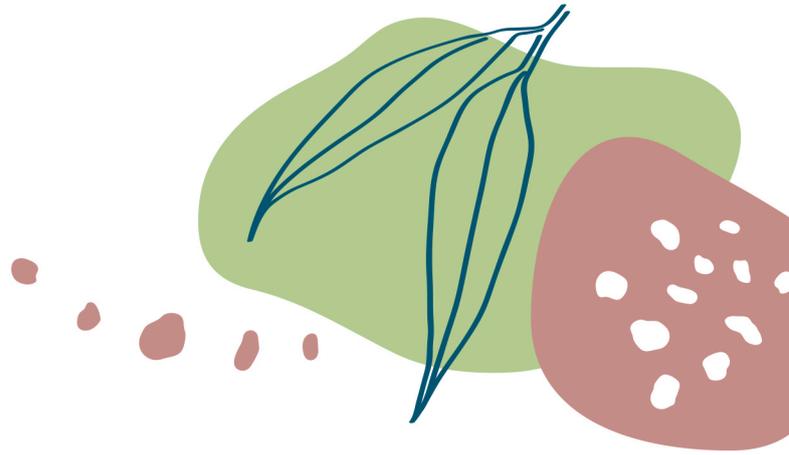


Media Release



21 September 2021

BURNING MATTERS – THE IMPORTANCE OF FIRE ON ROADSIDES

The importance of continuing a regime of regular roadside burning, for the safety of travellers and the regeneration of native grasslands, will be discussed at an online forum for CFA volunteers next week.

This event, on Wednesday 29 September, is designed to inform the community about the value of native grasslands and the vital role fire plays in improving them and reducing risk to communities. It will also serve as opportunity for CFA members to identify priority roadsides for burning.

The collaborative event is hosted by the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP), Glenelg Hopkins Catchment Management Authority (GHCMA), Corangamite Catchment Management Authority (CCMA), and Country Fire Authority (CFA), and is open to CFA Volunteers and interested community members to join from 4.30pm-6.30pm.

It is hoped the event will identify ways DELWP can support CFA brigades to continue burning. In addition, the event will encourage brigades to burn roads that are identified as a priority for native grasslands.

For those brigades which do not have grassland sites, this online forum should help to identify where they could assist fellow brigades located on the Victorian Volcanic Plains in burning their grassland sites, as the activity provides a useful training opportunity for members. For interested community members who love the grasslands, the workshop provides an opportunity to play an active role in the CFA activities.

The online event will feature talks from four experts, Dr John Morgan, Andy Govanstone, Ben Zeeman, and Mark Gubbins. There will also be time allocated for questions and discussion after the presentations.

Guest presenter Assoc. Prof. John Morgan said, "The great work that volunteer brigades do each summer, burning for fire protection, actually allows these grasslands to retain their natural values. As a result, an amazing array of little plants and animals now survive on roadsides and, for some, it's the only place we now find them".

Mark Gubbins, Westmere Group Burn Controller said “Roadside burning has been carried out by CFA volunteers for over 70 years to put in strategic breaks, to protect farming land, towns and assets. The long unknown benefactor of this practice has been native grasslands.”

Andy Govanstone, CFA Biodiversity Adviser said “The historic practice of roadside burning by local volunteer brigades is too important to lose. Roadside burning not only reduces local fire risk; it provides invaluable first-hand experience with smoke, flames and the workings of fire trucks and other appliances”.

“Roadside burning continues a practice of managing grasslands with fire, initiated by Traditional Owners long before Europeans came to our shores. For a significant range of reasons the skill and practice of roadside burning is too important to lose” continued Mr Govanstone.

Ben Zeeman, Glenelg Hopkins CMA Senior Biodiversity Officer said, “Roadside burning plays an important role in involving rural communities in bushfire management and awareness of bushfire risk. It’s really important that we listen to the volunteers and understand the challenges they face in maintaining their burns.”

To register your interest in this online event, please register via ammie.jackson@delwp.vic.gov.au.

This event is supported by Glenelg Hopkins CMA and Corangamite CMA, in partnership with DELWP, through funding from the Australian Government’s National Landcare Program and Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning.

ENDS



CAPTION: The importance of regular burning of roadsides by CFA brigades will be discussed at an online workshop next week. IMAGE: Dr. John Morgan.



CAPTION: Critically endangered native grasslands of the Victorian Volcanic Plains and the safety of community are key beneficiaries of a regular burning regime. *IMAGE: Dr. John Morgan.*