

HAZELWOOD MINE FIRE INQUIRY

Submission cover sheet

Post your submission with this cover sheet to:

Submissions Hazelwood Mine Fire Inquiry
PO Box 3460
GIPPSLAND MC Vic 3841

Email your submission with this cover sheet to info@hazelwoodinquiry.vic.gov.au.

Title: MRS	First Name: JODIE	Surname: PITKIN
Organisation represented (if applicable): LATROBE CITY COUNCIL		
Email address:	[REDACTED]	
Postal address:	40 22 Hazelwood Rd, Morwell	
Telephone: [REDACTED]	Mobile: [REDACTED]	
<input type="checkbox"/> Origin and circumstances of fire <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Measures by Hazelwood Coal Mine to prevent fire <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Application and administration of regulatory regimes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (please state) Remediation	Response to fire by: <input type="checkbox"/> Hazelwood Coal Mine <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Emergency Services <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental Agencies <input type="checkbox"/> Public Health Officials <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other Government Agencies	

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Date 12/05/2014

Our Ref:
TM:KP

13 May 2014

Hazelwood Mine Fire Inquiry
PO Box 3460
GIPPSLAND MC Vic 3841

Dear Sir/Madam

HAZELWOOD COAL MINE FIRE SUBMISSION

Please find enclosed Latrobe City Council's submission to the Board of Inquiry in regards to the Hazelwood Coal Mine Fire.

If you require further information please contact Jodie Pitkin on [REDACTED]
or via email [REDACTED]

Yours sincerely



JOHN MITCHELL

Acting Chief Executive Officer

Latrobe City Council – Hazelwood Brown Coal Mine Fire Board of Inquiry Submission

Introduction

Latrobe City Council wishes to make a submission to the Board of Inquiry into the Hazelwood Coal Mine Fire for the following reasons;

1. The Hazelwood Coal Mine Fire is located within the municipal boundary of Latrobe City Council;
2. The citizens of Latrobe City and the Council's regular operations were directly affected as a result of the Hazelwood Coal Mine Fire;
3. Latrobe City Council played a support role in response to the Hazelwood Coal Mine Fire;
4. There are a number of open cut brown coal mines within the municipality of Latrobe City that are within close proximity to townships, in particular the town of Morwell;
5. Latrobe City Council seeks to ensure that appropriate mitigation steps are taken to ensure the risk of a similar coal mine fire is reduced and that in the event a similar event does take place the Victorian government and Latrobe City Council are better placed to respond to the needs of the community during and after such a coal mine fire; and
6. The Latrobe City Council is concerned about the overall and timely remediation strategies and plans that are in place for the open cut Brown Coal mines within the municipality.

Council is very supportive of the Terms of Reference of the Board of Inquiry. In particular, looking into the origins of the fire and the regulatory regimes in place regarding brown coal mines and whether they are adequate. Council is aware that many members of the community are asking these exact questions as well.

Background

Council's submission will set out as follows;

- a. Latrobe City Council's association with brown coal mining. This includes a brief outline of Council's role in land planning regarding brown coal;
- b. An explanation of Council's role in emergency management, fire prevention and fire management and integrated fire management planning generally;
- c. Latrobe City Council's involvement in the 2014 Hazelwood Coal Mine Fire and opportunities for better management including communications, systems and clean up; and
- d. Latrobe City Council's requirement for the long term liveability of the towns in the Latrobe Valley, particularly Morwell, to be considered as the priority when planning, remediating and designing existing and future coal mines within Latrobe City.

- A. **Latrobe City Council's association with brown coal mining.** This includes a brief outline of Council's role in land planning regarding brown coal.

Latrobe City Council and its predecessors have had a long association with open cut brown coal mining. There is an abundance of brown coal spread beneath the Latrobe Valley from Moe in the West through to Rosedale. This brown coal has been utilised for the provisions of very affordable electricity for the majority of the residents in Victoria originally by the State Electricity Commission of Victoria and subsequently by private mine operators.

The State Electricity Commission of Victoria (SECV) chose the current siting of the Hazelwood Open Cut and Power Station as the most suitable site for the extraction of coal for power generation. The town of Morwell pre-existed the Hazelwood Power Station and Open Cut. It is the understanding of Council that the SECV were considering an option, amongst others, to relocate the town of Morwell, in the manner that the town of Yallourn was, in order to access highly winnable brown coal. This plan never came to fruition. The history of the development of the brown coal industry in the Latrobe Valley is documented in books such as *Heart of the Valley - A history of the Morwell Municipality* by Stephen M. Legg and *Planning Power* by David Langmore.

The Latrobe Planning Scheme includes a Special Use Zone - Schedule 1 relating to Brown Coal. This applies to brown coal mining and power stations. There are a large number of exemptions under clause 52.08 of the Planning Scheme in relation to Earth and Energy Resources. As such, Council it is rare for Council to consider planning applications regarding development within the power stations and mining areas across Latrobe City.

In 1987, an Environmental Significance Overlay was introduced to the Latrobe Planning Scheme. This was designed to provide protection for existing settlements that are within 1000m of brown coal mines. This buffer was introduced to the Latrobe Planning Scheme well after the siting of the Hazelwood Brown Coal Mine by the SECV.

- B. **An explanation of Council's role in emergency management, fire prevention and fire management and integrated fire management planning generally;**

The Local Government Emergency Management Handbook (June 2012) states:

"Councils are not emergency response agencies and are not structured or funded to deal with large scale emergency events. Events that extend for periods of time will exceed the capacity of an individual council to provide an ongoing response and can have a serious impact on a council's ability to carry out its everyday business. Large scale emergencies can also directly affect council staff living in or near the municipality."

Council acknowledges that it is neither an emergency response agency nor a fire agency and that these activities are best left to the experts. Council does however, play an important role in Fire Prevention and Emergency Management Planning and Recovery generally. Latrobe City Council believes it is important to understand the Municipal Fire Prevention Planning system in its current operational environment.

The historical role of Council in fire prevention

The Country Fire Authority Act 1958 Section 55A requires municipal councils to prepare and maintain a municipal fire prevention plan. The CFA also provide "Municipal Fire Prevention Planning Guidelines" which establishes a process by which a Fire Prevention Plan can be prepared.

Municipalities generally have been required to and have provided an officer to carry out the role of "proper officer" or more recently "fire prevention officer". This officer's role has traditionally been one of annual inspections and service of notices/directions upon property owners whose property contains, or potentially contains, a fire hazard. The role of the fire prevention officer has changed over the last few years, with his/her involvement expanded out of the traditional urban area to the broader municipal boundary, the amendments to the CFA Act to include materials other than vegetation (grass) as a fire hazard, and for the officer to be able to issue infringement notices for landowners failing to carry out works required any Fire Prevention Notices. Previously Municipal Fire Prevention Plans concentrated mainly on the issue of wildfire, the serving of notices (for fire hazards) and the performance of other authorities.

Fire prevention plans now require planning for issues across a much broader spectrum including looking at all potential origins of a fire. These can be a rural wildfire, urban fires and building fires. The CFA guidelines require the plan to:

- identify fire risks
- identify priority risk environments
- define how the risks can be treated
- specify parties responsible for identified risks
- define the groups involved in fire prevention
- increase the community knowledge about fire safety
- develop programs to deal with identified issues

In relation to the Hazelwood Brown Coal Mine the Municipal Fire Prevention Plan dated 8 December 2011 stated:

8. *International Power GD Suez*

International Power has emerged from the privatisation of the power industry. There are three main operating areas under their control. These are:

1. *Hazelwood Power Station*
2. *Hazelwood Pondage*
3. *Morwell Open Cut*

International Power advises that they have a current Fire Management Plan for the Open Cut and have Emergency Management Plans for the Power Station. There is no Fire Plan for the station or Hazelwood Pondage however some prevention measures are in place.

Like all other members of the Power Industry, the issue of a fire in such a significant industry is deemed a very high risk.

The current role of Council in Integrated Fire Management Planning

The Municipal Fire Prevention Plan and Committee has now transitioned to the municipal fire *management* plan and committee.

The Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee (MFMPC) is a sub-committee of the municipal emergency management planning committee and determined its own procedures subject to the guidelines provided in the Emergency Management Manual Victoria (EMMV).

The MFMPC is made up of;

- The municipal Council (Latrobe City Council)
- The relevant Fire Service(s)
- The Country Fire Authority
- The Department of Environment and Primary Industries
- Other members as required.

This MFMPC's key role is to;

- Plan for fire management in a manner that coordinates fire management activities across agencies
- Provide information to and engage with the community on matters related to fire management planning
- Use the planning guide issued by the State Fire Management Planning Committee to draft a Municipal Fire Management Plan for recommendation to the MEMPC and comment by the Regional Strategic Fire Management Planning Committee
- Monitor, review and report on the delivery of the Municipal Fire Management Plan (MFMP)
- Advocate to the Regional Strategic Fire Management Planning Committee for municipal fire management needs
- To work with the MEMPC to align planning activities and
- To share knowledge and create an environment of continuous improvement.

Latrobe City Council's Municipal Fire Prevention Officer is only one member of this committee. This Committee in accordance with its duties has produced a Municipal Fire Management Plan (endorsed by Latrobe City Council on 31/10/2013). The Municipal Fire Management Plan identifies the importance of the Hazelwood Brown Coal Mine and power station. Council would like to see greater involvement in municipal fire planning from key industry players to ensure that overall we are best placed to prepare for emergency events.

Council's Specific role in Fire Prevention

Council is resourced with one officer, the Municipal Fire Prevention Officer who is responsible for fire prevention. This officer is also the Municipal Emergency Response Officer under the Emergency Management legislation. This officer contributes to both the MEMPC and the MFMPC and ensures that Council satisfies its statutory duties in relation to these committees. At times during the fire season the Municipal Fire Prevention Officer is provided some additional resources to meet the increasing demand to undertake Fire Prevention Inspections.

During the 2013/14 fire season the Latrobe City Council Municipal Fire Prevention Team issued 621 Fire Prevention notices to landowners as part of its annual Fire Prevention Inspection Program. Five (5) Notices were specifically issued to the operators of the Hazelwood Coal Mine in December 2013 relevant to the parcels of land in and around the Hazelwood Pondage. These notices were complied with.

It should be noted that whilst Council has a statutory right to enter properties and undertake inspections, actual entry to the Hazelwood Power Station and Brown Coal Mine and other mines and power stations is restricted. All officers are required to meet the induction requirements for entry to each respective mine site prior to entry.

The Municipal Fire Prevention Officer deals with the high risk bushfire areas by undertaking a proactive inspection program at the start of the fire season of all high risk bushfire areas where practical. Latrobe City Council utilises an electronic inspection tool to allow a more streamlined approach to fire prevention inspections. Council also inspects the low risk (predominantly urban) areas when informed by the community of a potential fire hazard.

Community members have raised concerns with Council regarding the adequacy of the fire preventions systems in place prior to the Hazelwood Brown Coal Mine fire occurring.

C. Latrobe City Council's involvement in the 2014 Hazelwood Coal Mine Fire and its opportunities for better management including communications, systems and clean up.

During the emergency event, which at the time of writing this submission is still in the response phase, Council was a support agency.

On the weekend of the 7 February 2014 when the bushfire commenced in the Hernes Oak region Council activated its emergency systems by closing roads it controlled, opening relief centres as requested by the Incident Control Centre in Moe and Traralgon accommodating more than 300 people overnight and providing general assistance to the Incident Controller, in this case the CFA.

Council quickly recognised that the location of the fire would have a direct impact on a number of Council's services. At times, staff had difficulty accessing their own work locations. As such, Council implemented a range of decisions to close various pre-schools, early learning centres and maternal and child health centres and relocate them to alternate sites as required to protect their health and safety. This required significant resources, equipment, communications with affected community members and staff members to complete. In general, Council believes that the services it provided in the impacted area were managed, relocated and communicated quickly and efficiently under difficult conditions.

These activities are usual for Council during the response phase of an emergency event such as fire and flood. As the event progressed, fire entered the Hazelwood Brown Coal Mine (and Yallourn Coal Mine) and smoke and ash affected the town, Council continued to provide support, within its resource capability, to the Incident Controllers. This involved a wide array of services including opening respite centres for response agencies, coordinating and working with partners to provide information to the incident controller, providing communications assistance and acting as a conduit for information between the community and the incident controllers.

Throughout the event Council undertook a door knock of almost every property within the town of Morwell to gather information from residents and distribute up to date information to the households.

It should be noted that at times, Council was asked to take on roles which it quite simply did not have the resources to undertake. At these times and in accordance with the Emergency Management Manual Victoria, Council's Co-ordinator Emergency Management provided this information to the Incident Controller. As previously stated Council is not a lead agency in the response phase of an emergency event and is not resourced or trained to do so.

Council's resources were particularly challenged during the response phase of this event as its own headquarters and Morwell depot are located within the area identified as the most impacted and were directly affected by the smoke and ash from the Hazelwood Brown Coal Mine Fire. Many of Council's staff, both in the mobilised emergency roles and regular roles, were detrimentally affected by the impact of smoke and ash from the Hazelwood Brown Coal Mine Fire akin to many members of community.

It is the position of Latrobe City Council that the Board of Inquiry should closely look at several areas in the response to the Hazelwood Brown Coal Mine Fire. These are:

- The systems of emergency management put in place and coordination of the various agencies
- The communications and distribution of information and
- The clean-up and recovery decisions put in place

Emergency Operations and coordination

Latrobe City Council understands that each emergency event is unique and dynamic and requires a specific response particular to that emergency. We are also aware that the Hazelwood Brown Coal Mine Fire presented novel challenges to fire response agencies and the wider community.

The systems that were put in place during the response phase of this event were different from those that Council has been involved in previously. Council believe the unique nature, duration of the event and the significance of its impact on state infrastructure saw an increased involvement in all levels of the Victorian government. The sheer number of agencies and people involved in the response effort was both enormous and challenging. To further highlight this, at one stage there were two regional control centres and three incident control centres in operation.

Latrobe City Council and indeed the community were unclear about what role Council was undertaking during the response phase and there was a much greater impact on Council resources than experienced in previous events.

The number of agencies and individual's involved created a confused and scattered approach to the call on Council's resources. At times during the response several Council officers were asked for the same or similar information and/or support by several different agencies via several different channels. This resulted in Council often duplicating requests or being confused about what was being asked of it at various times. We stress the point that wherever it was possible and within Council's ability to provide information, assistance and resources it did so. However, there were times when this simply was not possible for Council to do. Council assisted in a range of new response strategies not previously utilised including implementation of a respite centre and the establishment of a community advisory group.

At times, Council responded to members of the community who believed Council had a role in firefighting and its associated activities, mine regulation, monitoring of the Princes Freeway and other events that are not within its realm of control. We stress that whilst Council does not control emergency events it plays a critical role in linking experienced members of the community with fire response agencies to provide local knowledge and experience. This local knowledge, in Council's opinion, is critical to ensure an effective response to all emergency events.

Council has in previous events, consistent with the Emergency Management Manual Victoria become the lead agency when the event transitions into the recovery phase. This has also created confusion and challenges for the Council in what role it should take and what resources are required to satisfactorily meet its responsibilities and the needs of the community in the recovery phase of the Hazelwood Brown Coal Mine Fire. It is noted that this will be the first time that

Latrobe City Council and the Department of Human Services will share the lead role in the recovery phase.

Information Distribution and Communications

The wide array of different agencies, senior officials and elected representatives involved in the response to the Hazelwood Brown Coal Mine Fire created challenges in effectively communicating with representatives of Council and the community.

At times, the Council was requested to attend various announcements and press conferences a short notice and often with no clarity as to what was being announced. This led to confusion for members of the community and Council as to what the role of Council was during the response phase of the Hazelwood Brown Coal Mine Fire.

At other times, members of the Victorian Government and its respective agencies made decisions and announcements that Council was unaware of and that Council was not resourced or equipped to implement. This left Council unable to react to the best of its ability. It also fuelled mounting anger in the community when there was an expectation for these decisions and announcements to be implemented immediately.

There was a wide array of agencies providing messages to the community from their respective departments but it appeared that at times this was not coordinated or consistent in its approach. Council believes that this created confusion, fear, anger and a lack of trust within the community.

We note that in the early stages of the Hazelwood Brown Coal Mine Fire there was a significant lack of health information provided to the community regarding the smoke and ash falling over the town of Morwell. Council had raised some concerns with the types and quantity of air quality monitoring undertaken by the Environmental Protection Committee in February 2013. These concerns were further highlighted during the Hazelwood Brown Coal Mine Fire. Council is supportive of a continued regime of air monitoring throughout the Latrobe Valley. This will ensure the community is kept well informed about the quality of the air noting that there are open brown coal mines in the region.

Council is pleased to see a long term health study has now been confirmed by the Victorian Government and is keen to see this progressed and released to the public in due course

Clean Up and Recovery

The unique nature of this emergency event saw elements of the recovery and response phase occurring at the same time. Again, this led to confusion of the role and responsibility of the Council that is continuing at the time of writing this submission.

Some key examples of this include the provision of clean up kits to the community. During the response a Clean-up sub-committee was established to coordinate the clean-up program and implement the decisions made by the Victorian Government. Membership of this committee included state government and Latrobe City Council representatives and was chaired by Local Government Victoria.

Prior to the creation of the sub-committee, officers from Local Government Victoria and Latrobe City Council met to identify how the community could be assisted to clean their homes and how council assets such as roads and public infrastructure could be cleaned. Homes were visited by agency staff, inspections carried out by contractors and feedback from the door knock was all considered in recommending an appropriate clean up package for the community. These draft plans were submitted to the State for consideration. It became clear that the scope of the clean-up program would not be equivalent to the levels recommended by the sub-committee. With reduced scope and resources, the sub-committee prepared a new plan that essentially identified two target groups: those who had the physical capability to clean their properties (the self-clean category) and those who did not (assisted clean category).

For the self-clean category the committee identified a range of options including loan equipment such as high pressure cleaning equipment (eventually not included), HEPA filtered vacuum cleaners (to ensure all dust particles were contained), laundry and car wash vouchers (identified as required through the door knock undertaken), access to free cleaning products and minor equipment. Ultimately, the recommendation was made by the committee to provide the Morwell residents with clean up kits consisting of buckets, rubber gloves, face masks and goggles. In addition, car wash and laundry vouchers were also made available to the residents of Morwell.

Council is of the opinion that the reduced funding scope for the residential clean up, tasked to Latrobe City Council for delivery has in many cases not met the needs and expectations of the community. Latrobe City Council has consistently received negative feedback from the community regarding the equipment provided.

For the assisted clean up category, the engagement of professional cleaners Council was supportive of the idea generally. However, Council was requested to not provide or undertake actions necessary to procure the services of these companies/businesses prior to the State Government announcement of this program to the community. This led to delays in delivering this service to residents as Council was required to satisfy its own Procurement requirements, undertake OHS and Police checks prior to engaging suitably qualified contractors. Limiting those who qualified for an assisted clean, along with delays in cleaning the homes of those who did qualify resulted in increased frustration and anger from some community members towards Council.

The lack of clarity about what is and was being funded and provided by the State Government has caused resourcing challenges for the Council as well as creating confusion in the community. As Council is often given the responsibility of

implementing the decisions of other agencies (i.e. the cleanup kits), the community has a belief that Council is making decisions on what assistance should be delivered to the community.

D. Latrobe City Council's requirement for the long term liveability of the towns in the Latrobe Valley, particularly Morwell, to be considered as the priority when planning, remediating and designing existing and future coal mines within Latrobe City.

Latrobe City Council is concerned about the short, medium and long-term remediation plans that are in place for the brown coal mines generally in the Latrobe Valley. This is not limited to the Hazelwood Brown Coal Mine, but also includes the Yallourn and Loy Yang coal mines.

This is particularly relevant for those citizens who reside and work in the area of Morwell south of Commercial Road. It is Council's strong belief that the liveability of the town of Morwell must be prioritised over coal extraction when considering remediation plans and the future plans for the extraction of coal from land in the Latrobe Valley. This includes the consideration of:

- Stabilization of batters and mine walls
- Remediation generally
- Noise and dust reduction; and
- Proximity to existing settlements and residential areas
- Risk of emissions in case of fires

The northern batters of the Hazelwood Mine, the Princes Freeway and private property are in extremely close proximity to one another. Council is very interested and keen to be involved in the future discussion regarding the remediation and coal planning with both the Victorian Government and the respective mine operators to ensure it is well informed when planning the future of the municipality, especially in terms of fire prevention. To date, the Council is not generally part of these discussions. There are a range of areas within Latrobe City that have previously been identified as potential operating brown coal mines that should be reconsidered following this fire event. This includes the area to the west of Traralgon known as Area H. They should be reconsidered as they do not currently prioritize the liveability of the towns in the Latrobe Valley. The creation of a new coal mining pit in area H west of Traralgon, or on the land west of Morwell, would create significant dust and noise issues for those towns, not to mention smoke and ash issues in the event of the fire.

There are significant long term implications for towns in the Latrobe Valley, particularly Morwell, if liveability is not considered as a priority.

Conclusion

Latrobe City Council is supportive of the creation of a Board of Inquiry and its investigation into the Hazelwood Brown Coal Mine Fire. Council wishes to contribute in order to reduce the likelihood of a similar event occurring in the future and improving the ability of the emergency agencies to respond to such an event should one occur again.

As set out, Council, is an important part of emergency and particularly fire prevention but is not a fire management agency. It is not resourced, equipped or skilled to do so. The firefighters, who are skilled and trained in fire events themselves have done a magnificent job throughout the event in controlling and fighting the Hazelwood Brown Coal Mine Fire and we think this should not be overlooked.

We believe that there are a number of areas within the systems, communications and clean-up/recovery management of the Hazelwood Brown Coal Mine Fire that could be improved in order to assist the affected members of the community. These include the activities of Council itself, during and after the fire event.

Whilst not set out in detail, the Latrobe City Council has had fears for some time around the general remediation of Brown Coal Mines in the Latrobe Valley. This is not specific to the Hazelwood Mine but is general for each of the respective mines. Morwell in particular is immediately adjacent both the Hazelwood Open Cut and the Yallourn Open Cut and is concerned about the effect these activities are taking on the town itself. Council is very interested in being involved in the planning for the short, medium and long term remediation of the existing mines and the planning for the use of brown coal in the future in order for it to best manage the growth of the municipality.

Overall, the Council would like;

- Greater clarity of the role of all local Council's in Emergency Management (Preparation, Prevention, Response and Recovery) and Fire Prevention efforts;
- Improved overall municipal fire management planning inclusive of each of major industries in the municipality including the owners of the Hazelwood Power Station;
- Improved systems and communication between all agencies involved in emergency response and recovery, with the recognition that recovery starts with response;
- Improved mechanisms of communicating with the community during emergency response and recovery;
- Greater clarity and involvement in coal allocation and mine planning to ensure Council can plan for orderly and safe development of the municipality; and
- Prioritization of the liveability of the town of Morwell, and the broader Latrobe City towns, over the extraction of brown coal when creating remediation plans for existing mines and allocating any future mining licenses.

Support documents for Latrobe City Council's Submission to the Board of Inquiry (Hazelwood Brown Coal Mine Fire Submission)

Attachment 1 - Latrobe Municipal Fire Management Plan 2013-2016

Attachment 2 - Notes from discussion with EPA April 2013

Attachment 3 - Notes from discussions with EPA September 2013

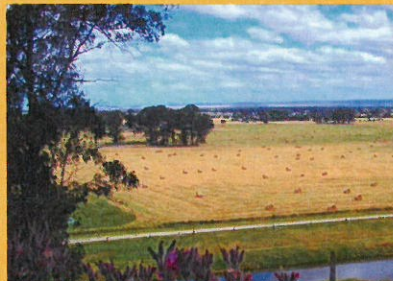
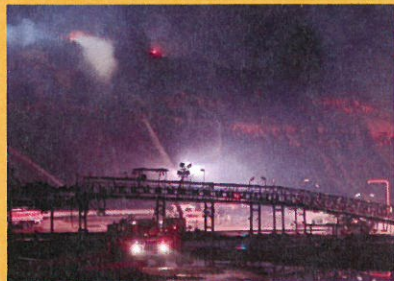
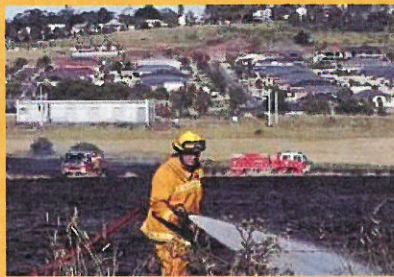
Attachment 4 - 2013-14 Fire Season Infringement Notices Map

Attachment 5 - Minutes from Latrobe Municipal Fire Management Committee Meeting October 2013

Attachment 6 - Copies of Fire Prevention Notices served on Hazelwood in Fire Season 2013-14

Attachment 7 - Latrobe Planning Scheme – Local Provision Gippsland Coalfields

Latrobe City Fire Management Plan 2013 – 2016



INTERNAL VERSION – NOT FOR PUBLIC VIEWING

Version 2.0 26 June 2013

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Chair's Foreword

I am pleased to present this first version of the Latrobe Fire Management Plan (FMP). On behalf of the Fire Management Planning Committee (FMPC), the production of this plan has been consistent with principles outlined in the Integrated Fire Management Planning Framework (2007), the State Fire Management Strategy (2009) and the Integrated Fire Management Planning Guide (2010).

This plan is the result of extensive collaboration between government agencies and land managers across the municipality¹. The key has been the commitment demonstrated by representatives on the FMPC to improve planning and, hence, community outcomes from the occurrence of fire in and bordering Latrobe City both planned and unplanned.

This plan includes the risk of fire associated with bushfire², structure fire and fire involving chemicals and is a living document that will now be presented to communities, businesses and organisations throughout the municipality for consultation and input.

I would like to personally thank all those who have contributed to the production of this plan and those who have been willing to commit their time and considerable expertise, both as members of the FMPC and as experts in their field.

Mick Williams
Chair
Latrobe Municipal Fire
Management Planning Committee

¹ In all cases the word "municipal" refers to the geographical footprint


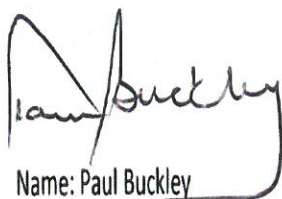
² Bushfire is a generic term for all types of vegetation fires

Authorisation and Endorsement

The Latrobe City Council is the custodian of the Latrobe Fire Management Plan (FMP), as a sub plan of the Municipal Emergency Management Plan (MEMP).

This FMP has been produced by the Fire Management Planning Committee pursuant to Section 20 of the Emergency Management Act 1986; and will be deemed to fulfil Section 55A of the CFA Act 1958.

The signatories below, on behalf of their respective agencies commit to the implementation of this plan as it applies to each agency.



Name: Paul Buckley
Chief Executive Office
Latrobe City

Name: Mark Potter
Regional Director
CFA Gippsland Region

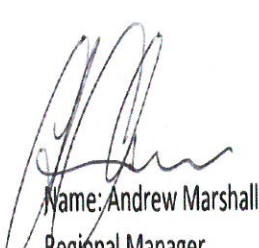
Date: 01/10/13

Date: 26/6/13




Name: Michael Timpano
Regional Director
DEPI Gippsland Region

Date: 17/7/13



Name: Andrew Marshall
Regional Manager
East Region
Parks Victoria

Date: 15/7/2013



Name: Ricky Ross APM
Regional Emergency
Management Inspector
Victoria Police

Date: 27/6/13



Name: Sebastian Motta
Regional Director
VicRoads Eastern Region

Date: 17/7/13

Index to Amendments

Version	Author	Date of Amendment	Brief Description
Version 1.0	FMPC	18/04/2013	DRAFT document creation for community consultation
Version 2.0	FMPC	28/06/2013	Document for publication

The Latrobe FMPC has made every effort to ensure the accuracy of the information contained within this plan. Any inaccuracies or omissions should be notified to:

David Johnson
Network Manager – Gippsland Region
State Fire Management Planning Support Team

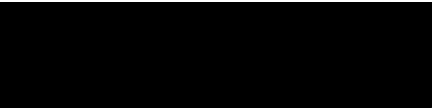

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Table of Contents

<i>Chair's Foreword</i>	1
Authorisation and Endorsement	2
Part 1 – Introduction	7
<i>Introduction to Fire Management</i>	7
<i>Authority for Plan</i>	8
<i>Planning Process</i>	8
<i>Period of Plan</i>	8
<i>Stakeholder Analysis and Engagement Process</i>	8
Part 2 – Engagement and Communications	9
Part 3 – Summary of Environmental Scan	10
<i>Land Managers</i>	10
<i>Population, Demographic and Settlement Information</i>	10
<i>Economy</i>	12
<i>Economic Infrastructure</i>	12
<i>Natural Resources</i>	12
<i>Built Environment</i>	13
<i>Climate</i>	13
<i>Fire History Summary</i>	13
<i>Planning Priorities (Values)</i>	17
<i>Future Fire Management</i>	17
Part 4 – Municipal Fire Management Objectives	20
<i>Plan Objectives</i>	20
<i>Plan Outcomes</i>	22
<i>Links to Other Plans</i>	22
Part 5 – Fire Management Risk Strategies	23
<i>Bushfire Risk Treatments</i>	23
<i>Structure Fire Risk Treatments</i>	25
<i>Major Industry/Infrastructure</i>	26
<i>Fires Involving Chemicals Risk Treatments</i>	27
<i>Multi Agency Workspan</i>	27
Part 6 – Improvement, Plan Reporting and Review Process	28
<i>Audit Plan</i>	28
<i>Plan Review and Update</i>	28
Part 7 – Attachments	29

Attachment A-1 Register of Assets at Risk – Bushfire.....	31
Attachment A-2 Register of Assets at Risk – Structure Fire.....	55
Attachment A-3 Register of Assets at Risk – Fires Involving Chemicals.....	63
Attachment B Multi Agency Works Plan.....	65
Attachment C-1 Hazard Trees Identification (<i>Electricity Safety Act 1998</i>).....	79
Attachment C-2 – Community Information Guides - Bushfire.....	85
Attachment C-3 – Neighbourhood Safer Place – Place of Last Resort.....	87
Attachment C-4 – Community Fire Refuges.....	89
Attachment D – Engagement and Communications Plan.....	91
Attachment E – Maps.....	95
Attachment F – Links to other plans.....	109
Attachment G – Fire Access Roads.....	111
Attachment H – Static Water Supplies.....	113
Attachment I – Fuel Management Breaks.....	115
Attachment J – Stakeholder Distribution List.....	119
Attachment K – Glossary of Bushfire and Structure Fire Terms.....	121
Attachment L – Acronyms.....	127
Attachment M – References.....	129



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Part 1 – Introduction

Introduction to Fire Management

The underlying basis of fire management is; protection and preservation of life, property and the environment. Within this context there are three fire risks for communities in the Latrobe City, bushfire³, structure fire and fires involving chemicals.

The purpose of the Fire Management Plan (FMP) is to chart the planned and coordinated implementation of measures designed to minimise the occurrence, and mitigate the effect of fire in Latrobe, and the planned use of fire in the landscape for a variety of purposes. One important aspect of implementing the FMP is to engage communities so that they have a valid influence in the fire management planning process. It ensures that the Latrobe FMP responds to community needs, values and risks.

Bushfire

In Victoria we live in a fire prone environment dictated by our climate of wet winters and hot dry summers. Fire management needs to be conducted with an understanding of both the role fire plays with the threats it can pose to life and property, in biodiversity maintenance and the management of our parks and forests.

Structure Fire

Structure fire is a hazard directly relating to the built environment. Structure fire can lead to impacts the following building types:

- residential
- industry
- commercial
- infrastructure
- public assembly
- public accommodation
- healthcare and special accommodation
- agriculture
- marine

Coal Fire

Latrobe City is the home of abundant brown coal resources, the primary energy source for Victoria's electricity generation needs. Latrobe's large coal mines are at risk from:

- internal fire ignitions
 - underground smoldering of coal deposit
 - mine operations
- bushfire events

³ Bushfire is a generic term for all types of vegetation fires

Fire Involving Chemicals

A chemical fire involves the actual ignition of a hazardous material in sufficient quantity to pose a danger/threat to life, economy, environment and services to the community. A chemical fire may occur during manufacture, use, handling, transport or storage.

There is no recorded history⁴ of chemical caused fires in Latrobe however; there have been a number of fires resulting from vehicle accidents which involve the transport of volatile materials on local roads. In addition there have been occurrences of fires which involve chemicals. These fires are more complicated to manage and control due to the possibility of toxic fumes, damaging environmental runoff, and the possibility of increased or erratic fire behaviour.

Authority for Plan

This Fire Management Plan (FMP) has been produced pursuant to Section 20⁵ of the Emergency Management Act 1986; and will be deemed to fulfil Section 55A⁶ of the CFA Act 1958.

Planning Process

Initial development of this plan has been undertaken by the Latrobe FMPC and includes all fire risks, bushfire, structural fire and fires involving chemicals.

Following a period of community consultation relevant community input will be included in the plan which will then be submitted for formal endorsement by Council as a sub-plan to the MEMP.

The FMP is not designed to be a duplication of existing plans rather it is to consolidate and coordinate the significant range of plans that exist within Latrobe that relate to fire.

Period of Plan

This plan has been endorsed by the Latrobe FMPC for a period of three years commencing as of the date of adoption by Latrobe City Council.

Stakeholder Analysis and Engagement Process

Fire safety is a shared responsibility between individuals, the community, government agencies and non-government organisations, and the private sector and requires a partnership approach. All stakeholders are given the opportunity to contribute to fire management planning and thus undertake appropriate action to address the risk of fire.

Part 2 outlines the process undertaken in relation to community and stakeholder engagement.

⁴ CFA Fire Incident Reporting System

⁵ [Emergency Management Act 1986 - SECT 20 Municipal emergency management plan](#)

⁶ [Country Fire Authority Act 1958 - SECT 55A Municipal fire prevention plans](#)

Part 2 – Engagement and Communications

Community and stakeholder engagement is the key to the successful development and implementation of the Fire Management Plan (FMP).

The members of the Fire Management Planning Committee (FMPC) recognise people living in Latrobe have considerable local knowledge about the area's fire history and they could add valuable information for use in the development of a robust FMP.

A Community and Stakeholder Engagement Plan is at **Attachment D**.



Gippsland Community Engagement Forum May 2012

Part 3 – Summary of Environmental Scan

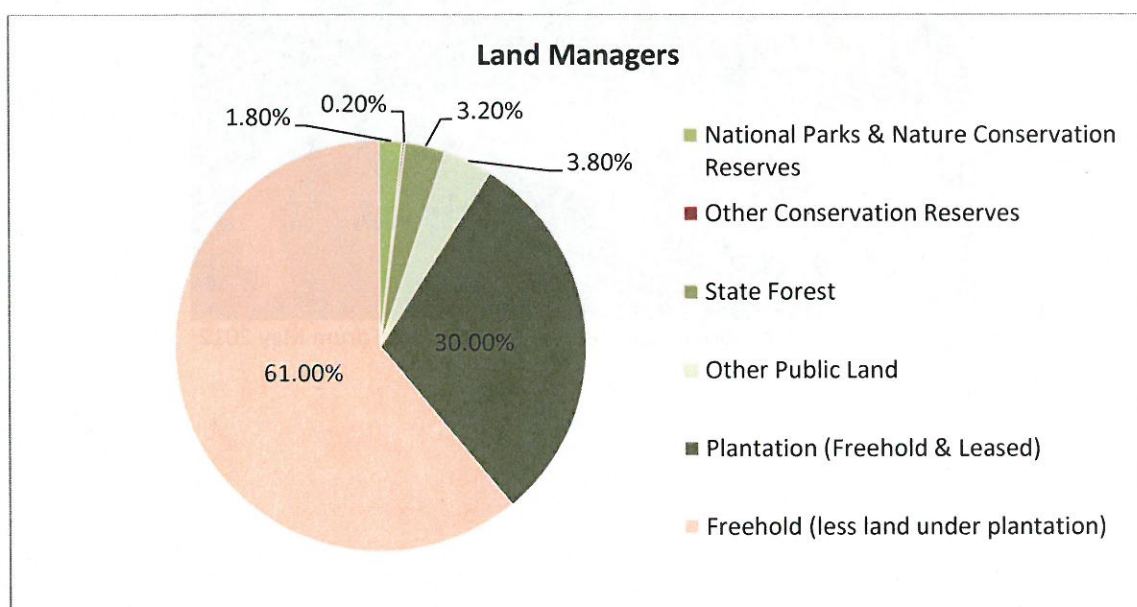
Extensive environmental scan information is contained in the Gippsland Regional Plan 2010⁷ ([Gippsland Regional Plan](#) - The Gippsland Regional Plan website was launched in August 2012) and on the Latrobe City website⁸.

All data in Part 3 has been taken from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Census 2011⁹ unless otherwise stated. The ABS Expanded Community Profile (i.e. place of usual residence) was used.

Latrobe City is located in the Gippsland region of Victoria, about 150 kilometers south-east of Melbourne. The City is bounded by Baw Baw Shire in the north and north-west, Wellington Shire in the east and south-east, and South Gippsland Shire in the south-west.

Latrobe is an urban and rural area with the majority of the population living in the urban areas. The City includes the four urban Centers' of Traralgon, Moe, Morwell and Churchill. The City encompasses a total land area of about 1,425 square kilometers. Latrobe is a significant energy provider for Victoria, with brown coal mining used to generate electricity. Rural land is used mainly for dairy farming and coal mining, general farming and plantation forestry.

Land Managers



Source: DEPI PLM25 GIS dataset 2011 and DAFF 2013

Population, Demographic and Settlement Information

Latrobe has a resident population of approximately 72,400 people. The age profile of the community spans from the 0-24 age group at 33.4% to the 25-64 age group at 51.2%, with population over 65 at 15.4% (up from 12% at the 2006 Census).

⁷ [Gippsland Regional Plan | regional projects | future plans |](#)

⁸ [Latrobe City Council Community Profile](#)

⁹ [2011 Census Community Profiles: Latrobe \(C\)](#)

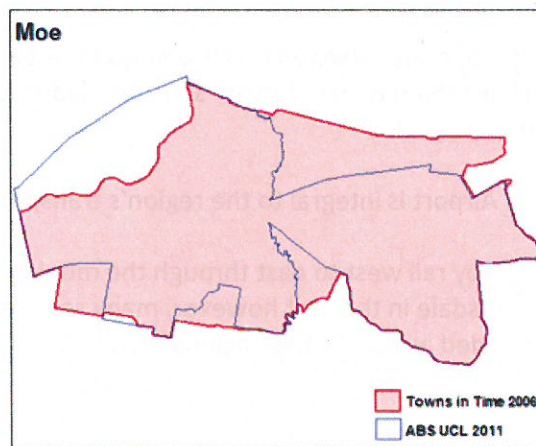
Projected Population Growth to 2026 – Latrobe City

LGA	Past			2011 Census ¹⁰	Projected ¹¹		
	1996	2001	2006	2011	2016	2021	2026
Latrobe City	71,115	70,645	72,075	72,396	79,891	83,531	87,145

Distribution of Population by Size of Town

Latrobe	Towns > 1,000	Towns >5K	Towns > 1K to 5K	Towns > 500 to 1K	Rest	Overall	
Urban Centre or Locality ¹²	Traralgon	23,834	52,532 72.5%	12,139 16.8%	4,688 6.5%	3,037 4.2%	72,396 100 %
	Morwell	14,005					
	Moe	8,751					
	Newborough	6,933					
	Churchill	4,943					
	Traralgon East	1,864					
	Yallourn North	1,493					
	Hazelwood North	1,476					
	Glengarry	1,360					
	Boolarra	1,003					

Prior to the 2011 Census the ABS made a complete overhaul of their geographic classifications for the 2011 Census and beyond. Hence the new 2011 town boundaries *Urban Centre or Locality (UCLs)*, do not match the old Towns in Time 2006 boundaries. In some cases town boundaries have been increased or decreased (see Moe example below) and in some cases new towns declared. Unfortunately trying to measure change, in particular urbanisation is not possible at the present with ABS still to develop a satisfactory method for comparing over time.



80.6 % of the population were born in Australia. Those born overseas usually came from the UK, Netherlands and Italy.

Around 10,400 or 17.9% of people (15 year+) do some form of voluntary work through an organisation or group.

¹⁰ 2011 ABS Census - Based on place of usual residence, excludes visitors

¹¹ VIF 2012 Data Tables - Department of Planning and Community Development

¹² ABS provisional figures

Economy

Overall, the main industries in Latrobe in terms of gross revenue generated are electricity, gas and water (26%) and manufacturing (18%). Most of this production is based on processing the local natural resources of coal and timber. The direct contribution of primary industries is comparatively low with agriculture, forestry and fishing directly generating 2% and mining 7% of gross revenue.

Approximately 16.5% of Latrobe is used for managed forestry, 30% for agriculture and 10% for coal mining. Timber production is concentrated in the hills and it includes native forest harvesting in the foothills of the Great Dividing Range and pine and hardwood plantations in the Strzelecki's. Coal mining and agriculture occurs mainly within the valley.

Economic Infrastructure

Water Storage Facilities – Water is among Latrobe's most valuable resources, and water quality, security and management are key opportunities. Latrobe has a more secure water supply and larger capacity sustainable waste water system than any other Victorian region. Water is supplied from three highly reliable and interlinked sources.

Managed Forests – The majority of plantation resources in Latrobe are managed as large-scale industrial plantations. Latrobe has the second highest number of plantations in the Gippsland region. Public forest supply significant quantities of native hardwood timber supporting a significant pulp and paper manufacturing sector that is a mainstay of Latrobe's manufacturing sector as well as a range of timber processing operations.

Coal – Latrobe is Victoria's powerhouse, providing 85% of the state's base load electricity and has the largest accessible coal resources in Australia. The region annually produces over 60 million tonnes of coal for conversion to briquettes, charcoal and electricity. Latrobe Valley coal is used for power generation, fuels, carbons, fertilisers and agricultural by-products.

Road Transport – Latrobe is the hub of road networks and highways for greater Gippsland. Recent Roadwork improvements like the Pakenham Bypass further shorten road travel times to Melbourne. The Princes Highway is a significant supply route.

Latrobe Airport – Latrobe Regional Airport is integral to the region's transport network.

Rail Transport – The area is serviced by rail west to east through the municipality with passenger services from Melbourne in the West to Bairnsdale in the East however, many services terminate at Traralgon. In recent times the line has been upgraded as part of the Regional Fast Rail project.

Natural Resources

The Latrobe Valley is a broad, relatively flat valley, bordered by low, rounded foothills up to 250m above sea level. The Latrobe River flows west to east through the valley and is fed by numerous tributaries from the Strzelecki Ranges to the south and the Highlands (Southern Fall) to the north, including Tanjil East, Tyers River and Rintoul's Creek. Native vegetation covers around 20% of the land area.

Latrobe extends across three bioregions being the Gippsland Plain, the Strzelecki Ranges and the Highlands – Southern Fall.

Gippsland holds some 16 per cent of the world's brown coal reserves the majority located in Latrobe.

Built Environment

In 2011 there were 31,253 private dwellings in Latrobe City with 89.4% (27,949) of these dwellings occupied and 10.6% (3,304) unoccupied on census night. The type of private dwelling structure occupied and number of persons usually residing is shown below:

Types of <u>Occupied</u> Private Dwellings in Latrobe - 2011				
Separate House	Semi-detached, townhouse, similar	Flat, Unit, similar	Other	Total
24,162 (86.5%)	973 (3.5%)	2,537 (9.1%)	268 (1.0%)	27,949

The average household size in 2011 was 2.4 people. 41.2% were family households, 26.9% were couples, 28.9% were single person households and 2.8% were group households. The distributions of household size are detailed in the dataset below:

Number of Persons by Household Size in Latrobe - 2011					
One Person Households	Two Person Households	Three Person Households	Four Person Households	Five Person Households	Six or more Person Households
8,101	18,306	12,039	14,592	7,774	No details

Climate

Latrobe has mild to warm summers with average maximum daytime temperatures around 23 to 25°C. In winter, average maximum daytime temperatures are mostly around 12 to 14°C. The Latrobe Valley's warmest month is February with an average temperature range of 12.5 °C to 26.4 °C and the coldest month is July with an average temperature range of 3.6 °C to 13.5 °C.

Annual rainfall averaged across the region is 800 millimetres with the occasional frost and snow on neighbouring hills. The most rain occurs in late winter and spring.

Fire History Summary

Bushfire¹³

The threat of bushfire exists annually throughout Latrobe. Based on an historical analysis major bushfires have occurred over the past 11 years at least every 3-4 yrs. CFA,

The vast majority of bushfires in Latrobe, around 96%, occur in scrub or bush and grass type vegetation with some 51% of all bushfires are contained to less than one hectare in size. The ignition factor of many fires is unknown, around 22%, however of the known causes of ignition the top ignition factors for bushfires are:

- Deliberately lit or suspicious fires 32.7%
- Unattended or inadequately controlled fires in the open 9.4%
- Fuel reduction burns private 6.7%

¹³ CFA Fire Incident Reporting system (2000 to 2010) & DEPI Fireweb incident reporting system (July 2002 to December 2011)

Some 74.3 % of the Latrobe footprint is made up of “freehold” land e.g. farming, business, and residential. Plantations make up 16.5 % and some 9 % is Public Land (National Parks, State Forests, Conservation Reserves, etc.). While forest fires represent only some 3.8% of all bushfires; when they do occur they can have devastating consequences as occurred in the Black Saturday fires of 2009.

There have been a number of significant bushfires in the Latrobe area since 1906, these include (but not limited to) the following:

Year	Start Date	Duration (days)	Incident Name	Latrobe Areas Affected	Cause	Size (ha)
2009	7/02/2009	Part of Black Saturday Fires	Glendonald Rd	Churchill	Deliberate lighting	24,500
2009	28/1/2009	6	Delburn Complex	Delburn, Boolarra to Mirboo North	Deliberate lighting	6,440
2008	14/09/2008	1	Brodribb Rd	Hazelwood	Unknown	Unknown
2006	14/12/2006	22	Coopers Creek	Toongabbie, Cowwarr, Seaton and surrounds to the West, NW, North & NE	Unknown	25,952
2003	12/02/2003	13	Princes Freeway	Morwell, Traralgon West	Vehicle	640
1998	29/09/1998	1	Moondarra Control	Moondarra	Unknown	670
1997	31/12/1997	12	Caledonia Fires	Caledonia River area of Alpine National Park	Campfire	32,000
1988	12/04/1988	1	Yinnar	Yinnar	Burn Off	
1983	8/02/1983	1	Driffield	Driffield	Unknown	1,500
1978	6/03/1978	1	Toongabbie	Toongabbie	Unknown	2,800
1972	6/09/1972	1	Glengarry	Glengarry	Unknown	809
1965	15/02/1965	17	Gippsland	Briagolong, Glenaladale, Boisdale, Licola, Stockdale	Deliberate lighting	Total for Gippsland 303,515
1944	14/02/1944		Yallourn	Morwell, Yallourn	Out of control burn off	1,160,000
1939	13/01/1939	7	Black Friday	Yallourn	Unknown	Unknown



Churchill fire, Black Saturday 2009

Structure Fire

Structure fires occur across all areas of the municipality. During the financial year period of 2000/2001 to 2010/2011 the average numbers of structure fires, including the energy industry, were 88.9 per financial year. If the energy industry were excluded from the figures the average would reduce to 78.3 per structure fires per financial year, or 12 per 1,000 head of population¹⁴.

During this period residential house and residential garage fires made up some 68 % of all structure fires. For all other types of structure fires (e.g. Commercial Offices, Commercial Retail, Schools and Manufacturing) each recorded 33 or less incidents over the 11 year period.

Over the last decade there has been a strong upward trend in “Residential (House) year round use” properties and a minor downward trend for “Residential garages”. Within the energy industry there has been a downward trend over the same period.

There have been a small number of significant commercial and industrial structure fires¹⁵ in the Latrobe area, these include (but not limited to) the following:

Year	Start Date	Incident Name	Structure	Town	Community Impact
2012	7/12/12	Argyle St Nursery	Commercial plant nursery and gift shop	Traralgon	
2008	6/09/2008	Moe Shop Fires	Moe Shopping Complex, 'The Purvis Plaza'	Moe	Many shops failed to re-open as businesses we not insured.
2005	16/09/2005	Rocklea Spinning Mills	The mill remained operational during the fire.	Moe	Nil
1991	23/10/1991	CIG Gas Manufacturing Plant	A series of explosions blew the roof off the 2 storey building.	Morwell	1,000 people were evacuated.
1991	1/01/1991	Morwell	Explosion and Fires left 44 shops damaged	Morwell	Economic losses



Traralgon commercial plant nursery fire, December 2012

¹⁴ Based on 2006 ABS Census

¹⁵ House fires have not been included as this may be distressing for family and friends

State/National Infrastructure Fires

Latrobe City contains infrastructure assets of state and national importance. These include Power Generation facilities (coal mines, power stations and major power transmission links); and Latrobe Regional Hospital.

There have been a number of significant fires involving power generation facilities, these include (but not limited to) the following:

Year	Start Date	Incident Name	Event
2006	12/10/2006	Morwell Open Cut	Fire for 2km along the coalface. Fire damaged one coal dredger and a conveyor belt.
2006	22/01/2006	Yallourn W Control	Coal conveyor at Yallourn Power Station. Coal supply was restored within five days.
2003	26/12/2003	Energy Brix	Destruction of one of the briquetting facilities estimated in excess of \$6 million.
1998	18/08/1998	Loy Yang 'A' Power Station	Fire started in crusher house and extended down the rising conveyor
1996	12/08/1996	Energy Brix	Brown Coal Briquette Factory
1977	4/11/1997	Morwell Open Cut	No details



Morwell open cut fire October 2006

Fires Involving Chemical

During the financial year period of 2000/2001 and 2010/2011 no fires involving chemicals¹⁶ were recorded in Latrobe¹⁷.

¹⁶ As opposed to "chemical spills"

¹⁷ CFA Fire Incident Reporting System (FIRS)

Planning Priorities (Values)

The priorities or “values” for Latrobe are:

- Protection and preservation of life is paramount.
- 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 values that consider the cultural, biodiversity, and social values of the environment.

These priorities are consistent with Gippsland regional and State¹⁸ fire management policies¹⁹ and plans^{20,21}.

Future Fire Management

An analysis of the environmental scan concluded the following future implications for fire management:


Context	Implications for future fire management
<p>In 2006 approximately 78.5 % of the Shire’s population lives in towns and some 21.5 % of the population are located in villages and settlements of less than 500 people.</p> <p>Currently Latrobe has a youthful population however by 2026 the proportion of residents over the age of 60 will significantly increase.</p>	<p>Ongoing development of the urban rural fringe. These interface areas are more vulnerable with increased risk of bushfire.</p> <p>Decreasing mobility and ability to prepare and defend properties against bushfire.</p> <p>Decreasing mobility also raises vulnerability in structure fires.</p>
<p>New Bushfire planning provisions being developed with implementation from 2012 onwards – with a focus on protection of human life.</p> <p>Bushfires have immediate and long-term psychological impacts on individuals and communities, including anxiety, fatigue and financial stress.</p> <p>Lower social economic population group less likely to look after themselves or to maintain fire safe properties, may result in greater risk for occupant and fire services. Likely to increase level of dependency on EM agencies.</p>	<p>Evacuation issues during a major bushfire: major roads protected to aid with evacuation and emergency services access. CIGs and NSP-PLR will all require a greater commitment to community engagement.</p> <p>Disadvantaged less likely to have the capacity or resilience to live in higher risk areas, respond or recovery from a bushfire. Hence a greater demand for ‘targeted’ community engagement. However, a range of communities are actively engaged in community planning processes and there is evidence that those communities have developed higher levels of capacity and resilience.</p>

¹⁸ IFMP strategy 2009

¹⁹ [Bushfire Safety Policy Framework - Fire Services Commissioner Victoria](#)

²⁰ [State Bushfire Plan - Fire Services Commissioner Victoria](#)

²¹ [Building new foundations - Fire Services Commissioner, Victoria](#)

Context	Implications for future fire management
<p>Structure fires Residential structure fires make up over 68% of all structure fires. Over the past 11 years there has been a strong upward trend in “Residential year round use” properties at 62.1% with “Residential garages” at 6.1% having a slight downward trend.</p> <p>Latrobe has the highest number of residential fires per 1,000 head of population in the Gippsland region at 8.3 per 1,000 followed by East Gippsland and Bass Coast at 7.5 per 1,000 with Baw Baw the lowest at 5.8 per 1,000.</p>	<p>CFA has a number of State level home fire safety strategies in place. However, further analyses of the CFA FIRs data is to be done to establish how house fires start are occurring in Latrobe. This analysis to be cross referenced with social-demographic data for the establishment of more local and targeted home fire safety strategies. Resourcing these strategies will require discussions with CFA.</p>
<p>Coal mine and electrical generating fires Coal mines are heavily regulated through State legislation.</p> <p>Mine fires occur regularly, most are minor and are extinguished by mine owner/operator on-site fire response resources, with CFA backup, and have no effect on the broader community.</p> <p>Major mine fires have occurred in the past and can, as in October 2006, result in large numbers of community volunteers from CFA and support agencies and well as mine, CFA and other agency employees engaged for six days. Fire response and recovery costs can also range into the millions of dollars.</p>	<p>All power generators and coal mining companies are engaged in the Gippsland Arson Prevention Program. This ensures a coordinated approach to this prevention strategy and needs to continue.</p> <p>Imperative coal mine and electricity generating companies maintain a high level of maintenance and housekeeping to minimise occurrence of fire. This includes buffer zone areas between mines and adjoining vegetation.</p>
<p>Forestry Fire starts within managed plantations are low however arson activity has been a long term problem.</p> <p>Threat to plantation estate from fire burning into it needs to be managed.</p> <p>Public land management strategies currently place fire as a high priority to be managed appropriately.</p> 	<p>Bushfire arson prevention programs need to continue across all sectors.</p> <p>Need to maintain appropriate prevention and response arrangements to ensure loss of plantation estate from bush fire is minimised.</p> <p>State Government strategy to increase fuel reduction burning in State Forests needs to continue to ensure best level of protection is provided to the communities of Latrobe City.</p>

Context

Implications for future fire management

Transport

Major transport corridors, both road and rail traverse the Municipality. Whilst these do not generate large numbers of fires there is a continuing fire risk associated with this activity.



Responsible authorities (road and rail managers) need to ensure that all necessary actions are taken to minimise the risks associated with fire either impacting on or starting from the road or rail corridors.

Response arrangements need to be appropriate to ensure an effective response arrangement is in place for all transport corridors across the Municipality.

Prevention strategies should align with any state-wide strategies as transport is a common issue across all municipalities.

Agriculture

Fires occur regularly in this sector and are likely to continue to do so. Recent history indicates that significant damage occurs when a major fire burns through agricultural land in the municipality, causing significant loss and disruption.



Fire agencies need to continue with all strategies to reduce the number of fires started by agricultural enterprises. This should fall in line with state-wide programs as the message is consistent.

Fire Agencies also need to continue to ensure appropriate response arrangements are in place to deal with fires in the agricultural landscape across the municipality

Part 4 – Municipal Fire Management Objectives

Plan Objectives

These fire management objectives have been derived from the State Fire Management Strategy 2009, Appendix 1.

Municipal Objectives	Gippsland Regional Objectives
<p>Key Theme 1 <i>Planning together</i></p> <p>The Latrobe Fire Management Planning Committee (FMPC) will consist of appropriate representatives from relevant fire agencies, local government and other agencies as appropriate. The committee will meet at least bi-monthly whilst establishing the initial FMP and then at least quarterly.</p> <p>The Latrobe FMPC will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out a municipal risk assessment and treatment analysis using agreed consistent processes i.e. Victorian Fire Risk Register - Bushfire (VFRR-B). • Use municipal environmental scan data to inform the planning process. • Carry out a stakeholder analysis and develop a communications plan which takes into account existing channels of communication and the needs of stakeholder groups including communities. 	<p>Key Theme 1 <i>Planning together</i></p> <p>The Gippsland Regional Strategic Fire Management Planning Committee (RSFMPC) will consist of appropriate representatives from government and other agencies as outlined in the IFMP framework, will meet at least bi-monthly whilst establishing the initial Regional plan and then at least quarterly.</p> <p>To support the development of draft Fire Management Plans (FMP's) for each Gippsland municipality the Gippsland RSFMPC will by June 30th 2011:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out a risk assessment for the Gippsland region which identifies Regional and above risks and provide a list of risks and recommended treatments to Gippsland Fire Management Planning Committees (FMPC's) for consideration in the development of their draft plans. • Ensure each FMPC has access to demographic, climate and population statistics and forecasts for their municipality to assist in the planning process. • Carry out a stakeholder analysis and develop a communications strategy which takes into account existing channels of communication and the needs of stakeholder groups and the broader community.



Municipal Objectives	Gippsland Regional Objectives
<p>Key Theme 2 <i>Implementing collaboratively</i></p> <p>Member agencies of the Latrobe FMPC will actively support the municipal planning process through the provision of appropriate staff, expertise and data.</p> <p>Member agencies of the Latrobe FMPC will contribute to the delivery of agreed works and treatments through inclusion in their agency business plans.</p> <p>For bushfire the Latrobe FMPC will work with adjoining municipalities to ensure a seamless approach to fire management across boundaries.</p>	<p>Key Theme 2 <i>Implementing collaboratively</i></p> <p>Member agencies of the Gippsland RSFMPC will actively support the municipal planning process through the provision of appropriate staff, expertise and data.</p> <p>Member agencies of the Gippsland RSFMPC will contribute to the delivery of agreed works and treatments through inclusion in their agency business plans.</p> <p>For bushfire the RSFMPC will evaluate and monitor planning arrangements across municipal boundaries and will provide expert advice and assistance to ensure a seamless approach to fire planning across the region.</p> <p>The RSFMPC will work with adjoining regions and the NSW fire services to ensure a seamless approach to fire management across boundaries.</p>
<p>Key Theme 3 <i>Building knowledge</i></p> <p>The Latrobe FMPC will review municipal risks and treatments annually and provide any amendments to the MEMPC and the Gippsland RSFMPC.</p> <p>The Latrobe FMP will be reviewed for currency annually, after a major incident or as directed under legislation.</p>	<p>Key Theme 3 <i>Building knowledge</i></p> <p>The RSFMPC will review regional risks annually and provide any amendments to relevant FMPC's for consideration.</p> <p>The Regional Strategic Fire Management Plan (RSFMP) will be reviewed for currency annually, after a major incident or after significant changes to the environment, agency composition or responsibilities, or regional infrastructure.</p>
<p>Key Theme 4 <i>Building capacity</i></p> <p>The Latrobe FMPC will actively seek opportunities for stakeholder collaboration to improve outcomes for communities and to reduce duplication and agency workloads.</p>	<p>Key Theme 4 <i>Building capacity</i></p> <p>The RSFMPC will actively seek opportunities for agency collaboration to improve outcomes for communities and to reduce duplication and agency workloads.</p>
<p>Key Theme 5 <i>Using fire</i></p> <p>The Latrobe FMPC will actively encourage the use of planned fire to achieve positive ecological and community safety outcomes.</p> <p>The Latrobe FMPC will work with fire agencies in the development of processes aimed at improving fire management on private land for community safety, as well as ecological purposes.</p>	<p>Key Theme 5 <i>Using fire</i></p> <p>The RSFMPC will actively encourage the use of planned fire to achieve positive ecological and community safety outcomes.</p> <p>The RSMPC will work with fire agencies in the development of policies and strategies aimed at improving fire management on private land for ecological as well as community safety purposes, and to achieve integration of complementary works on Private and Public land.</p>



Plan Outcomes

- This Plan is used to inform agency planning across the relevant components of Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery (PPRR).
- Document treatments and agency responsibilities for reducing the incidents and impact of fire on the communities of Latrobe City.
- That fire management across the municipality is carried out in a coordinated manner.
- Develop a list and map identifying fuel break systems and fire access road networks to aid in the mitigation of bushfire.
- Local community fire plans are developed for high-risk bushfire locations with a focus on what actions to take in an emergency.
- Enable agencies to identify the need for, and to target structure fire mitigation works/treatments.
- Identify locations with the potential for chemical involved fire to enable the assessment of risk and treatment effectiveness
- Identify risks associated with the transport of volatile materials on the municipalities' roads.
- Provide a consistent risk assessment framework to provide a basis for community consultation and the discussion of community concerns.

Links to Other Plans

Primarily the 'links to other plans' table represents other agency/organisation plans relating to the Prevention, Preparedness, Response and Recovery (PPRR) spectrum, refer **Attachment F**.



Part 5 – Fire Management Risk Strategies

The underlying guiding principle which drives fire management objectives at all levels is; protection and preservation of life, property and the environment.

There are a range of standard fire management strategies and treatments which are applied across the state, region or municipality, and as such will not be listed against each identified asset in the Register of Assets at Risk or in the Multi Agency Worksplan purely as this would make these documents unwieldy. These standard fire management strategies and treatments are listed in the following sections below.

In addition the Register of Assets at Risk has been separated into the three fire risk elements Bushfire, Structure and Chemical:

- **Attachment A-1** Register of Assets at Risk - Bushfire
- **Attachment A-2** Register of Assets at Risk – Structure Fire
- **Attachment A-3** Register of Assets at Risk – Fire Involving Chemicals

Bushfire Risk Treatments

A range of bushfire mitigation strategies and treatments exist that are applied consistently across the State and municipality, these include:

- Provisions in the Victorian Planning Scheme;
- Bushfire Management Overlays/Bushfire Prone Areas;
- Provisions in the Building Code of Australia (BCA);
- Compliance and enforcement of legislation;
- Declared Fire Danger Period/ prohibited period²² and restrictions;
- Total Fire Ban day declarations;
- Community information and warnings;
- arson prevention program, HVP, Council, Police, CFA, DEPI;
- Powerline hazard tree identification, management and reporting;
- Fire hazard inspection program and issue of notices;
- Public awareness programs – multimedia communications;
- Roadside vegetation management by VicRoads, municipal councils and DEPI²³ (a standard suite of treatments, broadly applied which includes: Slashing, burning, spraying and mechanical clearing);
- Council patrols and inspections;
- Emergency management signage;
- Event Management Plans;
- Routine asset maintenance;
- Bushfire Attack Level assessments for new buildings proposals;

²² [Forests Act 1958 - SECT 65 Enforcement of burning off etc. near State forest or national park](#)

²³ [Fire Operations Plans - Approved](#)

Where the FMPC has identified assets at risk from bushfire which require additional, specific treatments these are listed in Attachment A-1 Register of Assets at Risk - Bushfire. This attachment identifies initial risk ratings using the Victorian Fire Risk Register - Bushfire²⁴ (VFRR-B) data, with current treatments then taken into account to establish a level of residual risk.

Individuals also need to understand their personal level of bushfire risk and to undertake their own mitigation measures, including to prepare and plan for bushfire and act upon their plans when required.

Recommendations from the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission into the Black Saturday Fires 2009 have re-focused on a number of existing strategies with enhanced activities such as:

- Identifying Hazard Trees in relation to powerlines, refer **Attachment C-1**
- Community Information Guides²⁵ (CIG), refer **Attachment C-2**
- Neighbourhood Safer Place - Place of Last Resort (NSP-PLR), refer **Attachment C-3**
- Fire Refuges – none located in Latrobe, refer **Attachment C-4**
- Increased amount of planned burning of public land; refer Multi Agency Worksplan, **Attachment B**.
- Implement a systematic statewide program of bushfire risk assessment for all roads and provision to ensure conformity with the obligations in Section.43²⁶ of the *Country Fire Authority Act 1958* and with the objectives expressed in the VicRoads 1985 *Code of Practice.*, refer **Attachment G and I**.



Woorabinda School Camp Interagency Exercise (Bushfire and Evacuation) June 2012

²⁴VFRR-B Handout

²⁵ Formerly known as Township Protection Plans

²⁶ [Country Fire Authority Act 1958 - SECT 43](#)

Structure Fire Risk Treatments

Structural risk in the Latrobe municipality consists of a mix of residential, commercial and industrial premises with the largest concentrations in the large towns of Traralgon, Morwell and Moe with smaller towns contain mainly residential and commercial properties.

A considerable number of residential properties exist in remote locations and small hamlets scattered throughout the municipality.

A range of strategies and treatments exist which are applied consistently across the state and municipality to reduce the occurrence and impact of structure fires, these include:

- Provisions in the Victorian Building Act
- Provisions the Victorian Planning Scheme
- Compliance and enforcement of legislation
- Council Essential Safety Measures Procedures and audit inspections
- Industry guidelines
- Standards (i.e. electrical safety)
- Engineered controls
- Fire service response planning and training
- Staff training
- Event permits and event management plans
- Targeted education programs
- Public awareness programs – multimedia communications

Where the FMPC has identified assets at risk from structure fire which require additional, specific treatments these are listed in **Attachment A-2 Register of Assets at Risk – Structure Fire**.



CFA responding to a shop fire in Traralgon

Essential Safety Measures Procedures and Building Inspections

Latrobe Council is responsible under Section 212 of the Building Act 1993²⁷ for the administration and enforcement of Parts 3, 4, 5, 7 and 8 of the Act and the building regulations in its municipal district. This includes Victoria's essential safety measures legislation²⁸. Victoria's essential safety measures legislation requires building owners to maintain the essential safety measures to the required levels and complete a report on annual basis.

The frequency of inspection is a resource issue, which depends on staffing levels. Latrobe City's annual business plan shall determine the numbers of buildings to be audited and allocate appropriate funding and resources to delivery of that plan. It is envisaged that the following inspection criteria be used as a guide to determine the priority and frequency of inspections:

- complaints or referrals from another authority e.g. CFA, Police
- complaints from the public
- risk Assessment using Building Inspection Prioritisation, see table below

Risk Level	Inspection Frequency
High Risk	3 yearly
Medium Risk	6 yearly
Low Risk	10 yearly

Major Industry/Infrastructure

Latrobe City is home to a number of assets which have regional, state or national significance. Owners/operators of these assets have robust plans in place to mitigate the potential for impact from fire and other emergencies, and to ensure business continuity and maintenance of services.

The Gippsland RSFMP identifies assets at risk across Gippsland that are of Regional, State or National consequence.

Assets include those associated with:

- Coal mines, power generation and transmission
- Water supply
- Paper production
- Education and medical services
- Transport

These assets are listed in the FMP Register of Assets at Risk, along with treatments and mitigation strategies (refer **Attachments A-1, A-2 and A-3**).

Planning for these assets is a high priority for the Latrobe FMPC to limit the occurrence of and impact from fire including life loss, economic impact and the ability to deliver services to the municipality, regional, state, or nationally.

²⁷ [Building Act 1993](#)

²⁸ [Building Commission - Essential safety measures](#)

Fires Involving Chemicals Risk Treatments

A range of strategies and treatments exist which are applied consistently across the state and municipality for the storage and transport of chemicals which may be involved in a fire, these include:

- site specific plans
- Australian Code for the Transport of Dangerous Goods by Road and Rail
- Emergency Procedure Guides - Transport (AS 1678 series)
- Material Safety Data Sheets
- compliance and enforcement of legislation
- industry guidelines
- engineered controls
- fire service response planning and training
- staff training
- inspections

Where the FMPC has identified assets at risk from fires involving chemicals which require additional, specific treatments these are listed in **Attachment A-3** Register of Assets at Risk – Fires Involving Chemicals.

Multi Agency Workspan

Following the risk identification, analysis and evaluation process to establish the risk management registers – Bushfire, Structure Fire and Fire Involving Chemicals this data was then used to create the Multi Agency Workspan where the deliverable “treatments” are set out in detail along with the responsible agency or organisation for implementing the works over a three year period. The Multi Agency Workspan can be found at **Attachment B**.



CFA and HVP working together

Part 6 – Improvement, Plan Reporting and Review Process

This Fire Management Plan is a sub plan of the Municipal Emergency Management Plan prepared by the Fire Management Planning Committee (FMPC).

The Latrobe City Council has a legislative responsibility under the *Emergency Management Act (1986)* to develop a Municipal Emergency Management Plan, and under the *Country Fire Authority (CFA) Act 1958*, to develop and implement a Municipal Fire Prevention Plan (MFPP).

Audit Plan

This FMP complies with the provisions of S 55A(2) of the Country Fire Authority Act 1958 relating to fire risks and their treatment and will be deemed to meet the requirement for a municipal fire prevention plan under S 55A (1) of the Country Fire Authority Act 1958.

Plan Review and Update

The plan will be reviewed and updated annually by the Fire Management Planning Committee. This review will take into account works completed, environmental changes and any additional risks. Significant changes must be approved by the committee and articulated through the MEMPC to Council for adoption.

The plan may also be reviewed;

- Following significant incidents if required,
- As directed by the State or Regional Fire Management Planning Committees,
- As required by legislation.

The FMPC will report quarterly to the MEMPC and the RSFMP.



Part 7 – Attachments

Attachment A-1	Register of Assets at Risk - Bushfire
Attachment A-2	Register of Assets at Risk – Structure Fire
Attachment A-3	Register of Assets at Risk – Fires Involving Chemical
Attachment B	Multi Agency Worksplan
Attachment C-1	Hazardous Trees Identification (<i>Electrical Safety Act 1998</i>)
Attachment C-2	Community Information Guides ²⁹
Attachment C-3	Neighbourhood Safer Places/Place of Last Resort
Attachment C-4	Community Fire Refuges
Attachment D	Engagement and Communications Plan
Attachment E	Maps
Attachment F	Links to other plans
Attachment G	Fire Access Road Network
Attachment H	Static Water Supplies
Attachment I	Fuel Management/Fire Break Systems
Attachment J	Stakeholder Distribution List
Attachment K	Glossary
Attachment L	Acronyms
Attachment M	References

²⁹ Previously known as Township Protection Plans

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