

Fire restrictions lifted, but residents should remain vigilant

The Fire Danger Period and Fire Prohibited Periods finish on 11 April in South Gippsland, but Council is urging residents not be complacent following an exceptionally dry summer season.

Coordinator Grants/Emergency Management, Penni Ellicott, said although the Country Fire Authority (CFA) places only limited restrictions on the lighting of fires in the open air outside the Fire Danger Period, lighting of fires may be fully or partly restricted under legislation and by-laws administered by municipalities and the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP).

“People should always call the relevant authorities before lighting any fires, even when fire restrictions have been lifted,” Mrs Ellicott explained. “A person who lights a fire in dangerous weather or fuel conditions or lights a fire that damages another person’s property whether intentionally or not is guilty of a serious crime. The weather may be starting to cool down, but people still need to be careful.”

People should ring the Vicfire Burn Off Line before conducting any burns. Any fire left unattended in windy conditions can spread into bushland, onto a neighbour’s property or into other materials.

These messages are just as applicable to those enjoying National Parks and State Forests.

“People should be as careful with the use of campfires over this period as they were in the Fire Danger Period - particularly along the coastal strip where most damaging fires are wind driven,” Mrs Ellicott said.

Always remember to:

- Check local by-laws before burning-off and never leave a burn-off unattended
- Tell your neighbours and call the Vicfire Burn Off Line on 1800 668 511 so that brigades don’t get called out to burn-offs unnecessarily
- Check the weather forecast before you burn off and never burn off in dry, hot, windy conditions

Information about fire restrictions is also available in CFA’s ‘Can I or Can’t I’ brochure available at www.cfa.vic.gov.au/restrictions or by phoning the Victorian Bushfire Information Line on 1800 240 667.

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