

Time to get Fire Ready

The 2016/17 Fire Season is fast approaching and now is the time to take action to prevent your property from becoming a fire risk.

Property inspections will begin next month and Council's Local Laws Coordinator, Bruce Gardiner, said it was the responsibility of property owners to ensure their land was maintained and didn't pose a risk to others.

"In instances where properties are not maintained, Council can issue a Notice to Comply (Fire Prevention Notice), which requires property owners to undertake certain works on their land," Mr Gardiner explained.

"If our Fire Prevention Officers find the land is in need of some works the owner or occupier may be served with a Fire Prevention Notice."

Fire Prevention Notices are sent to properties where this process identifies a genuine threat of fire to life and property.

As an owner or occupier of property, there are a number of things that can be done to ensure your property does not pose a fire risk to yourself or others. This may include fire prevention works such as slashing all grass so it is no higher than 100mm and removing all fallen and/or dead vegetation.

To assist with preparing properties, Council's annual Green Waste Amnesty period, which commenced in November, will continue until 31 December.

Sustainability Coordinator, Geoff McKinnon, said residents could dispose of domestic-sized loads of green waste free of charge at any of Council's waste transfer stations.

"Council offers this service to encourage residents and holiday home owners to get ready for the fire season each year by removing overhanging limbs, dry leaves and cutting long grass," he explained.

Green waste does not include noxious or environmental weeds which must be disposed of separately as waste, with payment of the applicable disposal fees.

"This is so the quality of the mulch produced at the transfer stations is as good as it can be... weed free", Mr McKinnon said.

Things to do to ensure you are Fire Ready:

- Rake up and remove fuel sources such as dry grass, leaves, twigs, loose bark and fallen branches.
- Mow long grass to a height of less than 100mm.
- Neatly maintain gardens, trees and shrubs.
- Remove any rubbish or material that is likely to cause, maintain, or promote a fire.

- Store flammable liquids well away from the house.
- Store woodpiles away from the house.
- Place metal flyscreens or window shutters over windows.
- Keep gutters clear of leaf litter.
- LPG Cylinders – Face vent pipe away from the house and securely store in an upright position.
- Have a Fire Plan - Fire Ready Kits may be obtained from CFA.

For more information on Council's local laws in relation to fire prevention contact 5662 9200 or go to www.southgippsland.vic.gov.au.

Emergency Contact Information:

- Radio - 774(AM) ABC Melbourne (Victoria's Official Emergency Services Broadcaster)
- Phone - In an EMERGENCY DIAL 000 (TTY 106)
- Victorian Bushfire Information Line - 1800 240 667
- CFA Headquarters - 9262 8444

Websites:

- Fire Updates - www.emergency.vic.gov.au
- Road Closures - www.vicroads.vic.gov.au or 13 11 70
- Park Closures - www.parkweb.vic.gov.au or 13 19 63

The South Gippsland Shire is in the CFA's 'West and South Gippsland' Fire Ban District

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For media enquiries, please contact the Communications team on 5662 9200
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