

Community Catch Up Feedback
22 January, 2020

1. If you choose to live here, be responsible for your own safety. Evacuate all vulnerable family members and prepare your property.
2. Shire needs to keep ALL verges clear on public roads.
3. All properties need to be inspected at the end of Spring and orders for clearing to be implemented.
4. Alpine Shire needs an appointed Media person to administer information as it changes on Facebook etc
5. DWELP needs to remove rubbish piles along the West Kiewa River
6. Consider making fire assessment much earlier (i.e. August). Also check post fire season.
7. The Stadium is not a safer place if there is an evacuation notice. It is not a place of last resort. It is not considered defensible.
8. More information? Point of contact. Person to contact.
9. How to review perimeter fire risk and look at trees.
10. Some tutoring of people less confident of using apps. Suggest that people (especially older ones without family etc) select one source of information only.
11. Where has the Mayor been?
12. Trying to encourage neighbours to clean up property.
13. Clearing grass and fuel from side of road leaving town.
14. Elderly people do not understand APPS. Nor do we all have iPhones.
15. Trish, have you ever thought of trying to get Heather Ewart and the ABC 'Back Roads' TV program to the Upper Kiewa Valley.
16. Alpine Shire. Glenbourne Drive – The verge alongside farmland should be cleared/mowed right up to the fenceline. Not just a narrow strip alongside the road.
 1. Farmland and large properties abutting housing blocks should be cleared more often than 'once' before the fire season. Before/middle fire season.

2. Wider extend clearing 'strips' alongside fences/roads
17. Infrastructure. If a sudden bushfire emergency occurs and you need to get out fast, the exit roads need to be able to cope with the extra congestion of traffic.
18. The tip should have been open everyday during the crisis to allow people to remove rubbish.
19. Mt Beauty needs it's fair share of Alpine spending.
20. Equality within the Shire. Mt Beauty is a third cousin!
21. Backburning!!
22.
 1. Fire hazard areas – Shire owned property – verges, paddocks, roadsides (not Vic Roads) close to and within the townships.
 2. Our elderly and vulnerable were abandoned by the Shire – Home Care did not work!!
 3. Communication was negligible (and always is).
23. Lack of communication.
24. Volunteers doing work that should be covered (by paid) personnel by Shire, eg. Property inspections pre-season.
25. Give CFA/Police more power to order immediate property clean-ups.
26. Emergency template – great idea.
27. Core group of people to contact who have all the info,
28. Timely information about when waste services will run.
29. Not having conflicting newspaper articles for tourists – Mayor saying come here and stay away in same paper.
30. Stadium – clarity of when, how, what.
31. Locked gates! - DELWP need to unlock for fire season.
32. Nature strips not kept cut – eg. Glenbourne Dve – get larger machines for those areas.
33. Definition of income loss area not made early enough for Alpine Shire.
34. Run through of the Emergency template which is created.

35. 50 approx people @ this meeting – perhaps 50 tonight. How do you get the messages out to the thousands who are not here to learn or have their say – especially those who whinge on Facebook. Appalling that the Shire initiated the meeting but did not appear and paid for a facility, food and administration cost – couldn't they have need for their own facility? Following the cuts to budget we now do not have enough staff to cover our needs – use the supposed surplus. Should CFA volunteers be used to check fire safety standards in the community – I think NOT.

36. The Vic Emergency app wasn't updated regularly enough in some cases. So it was difficult to understand where the fires were heading. This impacted those people trying to decide whether to stay or leave. Smoke and personal health was a major issue.

1. The EPA should have local monitoring of the air quality and give regular updates. They should monitor each Valley with a focus on the towns in those Valleys.
2. The Vic Emergency app could be vastly improved to give people up to date information on fire activity. The EPA should be more active and give local communities up to date advice on air quality in their area. A mobile Air Quality Service should be available for these types of emergencies (and formal channels of communication on air quality be provided).

37. Yes, I know the emergency codes. We leave as early as possible because we take our caravan and my wife has Parkinson's Disease. We don't want to impede other residents or emergency vehicles.

1. My wife has Parkinson's Disease. I am an Asthmatic and don't tolerate too much smoke.
2. In recovery mode.
3. Less confusion – greater clarity of where to access key personnel and services. Better dissemination of bushfire information. One speaker on Alpine Radio was almost impossible to comprehend as he read the information from the emergency website!
4. Frankly the resources of the Alpine Shire are spread too thinly in times of emergency. It's all very well to boast how much money has been saved by cutting staff – it's another thing to provide resources during an emergency.
5. Regular community meetings involving CFA, Police, Alpine Shire, Neighbourhood Centre, Community Groups and the residents of the Upper Kiewa Valley.

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38. I know the codes intimately now!! I am still not clear at what point I go? I found it alarming, anxiety causing to be at a warning (Watch and Act) level for some days and also receive a text saying "You need to leave likely fire impact areas". Now I know how to access the map identifying 'likely fire impact areas' but it required me to use my laptop not phone for better resolution and go to CFA website.
- My personal issue is I have 2 dogs – initially very little options provided as to where I could take them, and be with them – self camping at Wangaratta Showgrounds not an option for me. By 2nd fire I had become, through word of mouth, aware of the option to evacuate to barracks at Bonegilla – pets welcome – very comforting for me.
- More free green waste drop off days and roll-out of green waste bins.
- Pets are part of our families – 'safer places and refuges' need to be able to accommodate 'contained pets'.
- Way too much mis-information being spread on local Facebook page – Carol Tunn did a fantastic job managing it through posts and comments. Other information – factual – very helpful.
- What is the difference between and 'safer place' and a 'refuge'?
- What resources are provided?
- When do they open?
- Numerous opportunities/sessions to be held where we can sit down and develop our own personalized plans under guidance of qualified people eg. CFA.
- *What to do if Kiewa Valley Highway is closed? I know the answer is to 'leave early but it's really hard to do.
- PS. I keep hearing from friends: "I'm not on Facebook, I didn't hear about that meeting etc."

39. Effects of smoke on daily activities, in particular, exercise.
- We observed, when returning home from Wangaratta, that smoke density varies a lot from Valley to Valley. During fires we would like to have an instrument located in the Upper Kiewa Valley to give frequent readings.
- A lot of disaster plans have flow charts to encourage common decision making processes. There is a lot of information provided from lots of sources but people need to know how to apply this information to their situation.
- Local information meetings were very beneficial. However advice of the time of these meetings should be on Emergency app. We don't listen to radio all the time and don't check Facebook addresses regularly. We missed the last meeting.
40. Yes, I'm fairly familiar with the Vic Emergency ratings and use the app. I go at "Emergency" warning as I need to evacuate my frail parents.

I need a medically supported evacuation process for my Mum. Some PTSD after evacuating twice. I would like to feel that I won't have to repeat the process alone.

A comprehensive data base of vulnerable people and their evacuation needs. At present this info seems to be fragmented – ie. Medical Centre has list; CCSP (home help) has another.

Also important: clear communication re; safe/r places to evacuate to. I have been informed by Shire that our Stadium is not one. Is not considered defensible.

Information re: which services are functionally available during the bushfire threat, periods especially during 'Emergency' and 'Evacuate' codes.

41. FREE TIP for greenwaste. Open more often especially from early Summer. MORE FREQUENT MOWING of verges. Especially in built up areas. No discrimination of outlying buildings used as residences just because they are in areas designated farmland.
TREE LOPPING/mulching OR use the wood to store for the elderly to access. PROBLEM TREES on private property. Where householders are concerned about trees on their property but lack the funds to PRUNE or REMOVE, the Council could do so for a SMALL FEE. Householder could decide to (a) clear up themselves OR (b) elect to donate wood for pensioner firewood.
DO NOT PLANT EUCALYPTS in built up areas.
42. I do think a very clear statement should be made... By the Shire? About safer places in our communities.
43. And the fact that our great taxi service compiled a list of vulnerable and elderly to identify evac and safety issues... thanks Roly Kukainis. The could be mentioned if planning a proper process.
44. For the many people who have domestic pets (fur and feathered kids), who would never dream of going anywhere without them, there should be a safe facility available for them, separate from people who do not have pets accompanying them. All creatures crated or leashed, the ability to manage excrement and safe fenced area for larger animals. It is no good listing safe places to evacuate to if pets are not allowed, people will just not go and those without pets should not be expected to listed to the cacophony of displaced/distressed creatures.
45. In situations like this it's important the community are aware of who to contact and who has responsibility for emergency management.
Pre-fire season perhaps a reminder to landowners of their responsibilities
46. There is no requirement by the Shire to have people prepare their properties prior to the fire season. Only if a concerned citizen reports them is any action taken. Because I was so concerned about a couple of properties in our area I

reported them. The repercussion for me having to report a near neighbour/friend who I believe has created a fire hazard in his yard and not cleaned it up is awful. I am certain, in the event of an ember attack, his yard is undefendable, and once his house is alight it will certainly spread to his neighbours. Council agrees and have served him a notice to clean up. It should not be left to neighbours to report ill-prepared properties, as the ill feeling caused, creates a long-term problem.

As the members of the CFA are volunteers and neighbours, to put the onus on them to serve notices to clean up I think is unfair, and certainly doesn't work.

I think the Shire should take responsibility to inspect ALL properties at least in Mt Beauty and Tawonga South, as they have been assessed as having a VERY HIGH bushfire risk. The biggest risk for Mt Beauty is from an ember attack, hence we need no litter around buildings or in the gutters. The current system does not create a safe town as most people are reluctant to report offenders.

In November it would be great to have more "Free Tip" days for vegetation with the Tip opened every weekend.

I also think there should be more emphasis on cleaning out spouting as many residents don't do it now as it is too hard. (A machine and operator is available).

Perhaps there should be more emphasis on conversation of water prior to a fire front affecting the towns, as we have limited amount of water stored. Keep the ban on sprinklers, and advertise the request widely. (More stored water would be great).

A list of vulnerable people is vital, and someone to coordinate what is to happen to them if evacuation is ordered.

Make our area safer by increasing the buffer zone at this end of the Valley. Push the bush back, but don't allow building on the buffer zone.

47. One thing that did come to my attention during the discussions was that there are people who are not really aware of their responsibilities during this time, or have the capacity to deal with them.

(1) Developing a fire-plan. People who are vulnerable, such as older citizens who have few family or friends who look out for them, may still be very unsure as to what to do and how to do it. Even the explanation of the difference between relief centres and evacuation seemed not to be understood.

I know the CFA ran a fire-preparedness meeting in October (?) which was poorly attended. Yet the community needs such a meeting, or several, targeted at particular community members – to make sure that everyone has a fire plan and understands exactly what is involved and their personal role(s) in such a plan. This might be an opportunity to compile a list of the not-so-obvious people who are 'vulnerable' and identify contacts for them. It would also be an opportunity to ensure that individuals had a sensible

fire plan, and alternatives, and understand the ramifications of adhering to it, or not.

- (2) Communication. The apps were great, as was the radio broadcasts. But...people such as the older members of the community still have computer/phone/app/tablet phobia – and panic. I did find the app slow on my phone (phone's fault) but better on my tablet. The app is good when you learn to read it. So as part of a fire-preparedness workshop/meeting/set of tutorials etc. how to access/read/control the app is essential. Also having multiple sources of information going simultaneously is not a good idea. (The app plus the radio plus the phone plus TV plus family of the other end of the phone giving advice from a distance simply stymies any rational judgement). Those who are already stressed and fearful, find it difficult to tune out unwanted information and just get more and more confused. So people need to be selective.
- (3) I suggest that organization such as Probus and U3A should do their bit in getting this information across to their members – powerfully. And well before the fire season begins, and maybe as soon as possible, given that the fire season remains with us for another 8 – 10 weeks. People need to be trained to deal with these emergency situations.