

Minutes
MADRA sub committee
Fuel Management Working Group Community Meeting
Wednesday 28 April, 11:00am
Mallacoota Community Club Rooms, Mallacoota

Present: Community Members (CM), Lyn Harwood (LH), Gail Cumming (GC, Community based Bushfire Management facilitator), Natarsha Baker (NB, EGSC Manager Emergency Management, East Gippsland Shire), Shane Turner (ST, EGSC Emergency Management Coordinator), Tim Davidson (TD, EGSC Emergency Management Officer), Daryl Burns (DB, Ranger in Charge of Fire & Emergency Operations in East Gippsland), Ross Cutlack (RC, Forest and Fire Management Officer from the Snowy District), Helen Bull (HB, Business owner Obliqua, Student Researcher, University of New England, community volunteer), Max Elliot (ME, Community volunteer), Don Tomkins (DT, CFA Commander), Sarah Adcock (SA, DELWP), Sue Bigdon (SB, BRV Building and Infrastructure), Katrina Barnes (KB, BRV Buildings and Infrastructure), Megan Dennett (MD, BRV Biodiversity and Environment Coordinator) Jennie Smith (JS, DELWP), Don Ashby (DA Community volunteer), Katie Symes (KS, BRV Mallacoota Hub Coordinator), Peter Hancock (PH, MADRA), Jenny Lloyd (JL, MADRA), Trindi Suratman (TS, MADRA)

Plus approximately 60 interested members from the Mallacoota community

Minutes: Sabine Amos and Maggie Langdon, MADRA admin

Welcome and Acknowledgment: Lyn Harwood

Meeting opened at 11:00am

ITEM	DISCUSSION	ACTION
<p>Welcome and Overview Lyn Harwood</p>	<p>We are here today because we are fiercely protective of this place. We want to see it managed and protected in the best way. We are unable to look at everything today, we are looking in detail at four main areas, Mortimers Paddock, the back of Terra Nova Drive, Western Front and Shady Gully. In the future we will look at Karbeethong, the North Western Corner of Mallacoota, Gipsy Point and Genoa.</p> <p>Introduction of Fuel Management Working Group and agency representatives.</p> <p>The four areas of greatest risk are interface areas between bush and houses. After we speak with you all today and adjusted these ideas - they will go to the Joint Fuel Management Plan.</p> <p>Once we have heard from Natarsha Baker, Daryl Burns, Ross Cutlack, Helen Bull and Max Elliot we will break off into 4 groups that address the areas of Mortimers Paddock, Western Front, Terra Nova Drive and Shady Gully. This will be an opportunity to view the fuel management plans for these areas and have your say or ask questions. Once we come back together I'll ask a representative from each group to speak about the ideas that were discussed.</p>	

<p>Natarsha Baker</p>	<p>Manager of Emergency Management EGSC. Welcome everyone. Thank you to community members regarding feedback on fuel management issues. We acknowledge the community's concerns. We need to protect the environment and the community needs to feel safe. Council is part of the fuel management group and acknowledges the importance of us consulting with the community, and we have a plan moving forward. Council have engaged a consultant to make an assessment on council owned land and to work with DELWP on fuel assessment. We can then look at scientifically recommended work to be undertaken. I am happy to speak with anyone further after this meeting.</p>	
<p>Daryl Burns</p>	<p>Ranger in charge of fire and Emergency operations in East Gippsland. 2½ years ago a group came together around fuel management and this group has evolved over time. Pleased to see a big gathering today. We welcome feedback so please come forward after the meeting if you would like to speak with us. We value community input and we are balancing competing opinions and information to inform our management.</p>	
<p>Ross Cutlack</p>	<p>Acknowledgement to country. Thankyou for this opportunity to speak. I am the Forest and Fire Management Officer from the Snowy District and have assisted the fuel management group. The Joint Fuel Management Plan (JFMP) is a statewide program that delivers works for fuel management, a 3 year rolling plan. These works consist of planned burning, slashing, mulching. We also welcome community input. The Bushfire Management Strategy is a strategic document that helps guide fuel management practices. APZ (Asset Protection Zones) are close to township and In this type of zone, the goal of fuel treatment is to reduce fire intensity, flame height, radiant heat, and ember attack on people and their assets in the event of a bushfire. BMZ (Bushfire Moderation Zone) - In this zone, the goal of fuel treatment is to reduce the intensity, rate of spread, and ember loads from significant bushfires, LMZ (Landscape Management Zone) encompasses the outer-lying areas and aims to protect significant biodiversity.</p> <p>Encouraged to see a great turnout today.</p>	
<p>Helen Bull</p>	<p>Risk. We live in a high fire risk area. Mallacoota is one of the highest risk towns in the state. Risk is a product of consequences and outcomes and a question of probability. Ember attack, radiant heat and wind are the factors considered when we are looking at risk.</p> <p>Amenity - Things we appreciate about our natural surroundings and things that keep us connected to our place. Amenity is important and to be considered. Solistalgia is a form of emotional or existential distress caused by environmental change.</p>	

	Amenity is a challenge we can address to achieve the balance of safety, biodiversity and amenity.	
Max Elliot	Biodiversity. I have a flora and fauna background and have been a member of the fuel management group for some years. The value of biodiversity here is incredible. We have littoral rainforest in Mallacoota and this biodiversity is of great significance. We'd like to keep visual amenity in the Casuarina walk. Important to keep some things for habitat for yellow belly gliders, koalas, lyrebirds etc. These areas are indicated on the plans you will see today.	
Group meetings	<p>11.45am - Attendees split into three groups to discuss the plans and put forward suggestions for four areas: Terra Nova Drive; Shady Gully and Mortimers Paddock; the Western Front.</p> <p>1.15pm - Attendees came back together to hear reports from each group.</p> <p>Lyn Harwood: Thank you for your attendance and the respectful way everyone has interacted. As members of the fuel group, we feel our work has been respected and we are grateful for the community interest and support. The groups will now report on each area, summarise their discussions and put forward any suggestions that have been made.</p>	
Group feedback: Terra Nova Drive	Megan Dennett: Our group held robust discussion about the need to balance biodiversity and risk, the importance of fire breaks, and recommendations and suggestions. These included the need for mulching to be done properly, and a tiered approach to the slashed area to increase the firebreak to 70m. It is good news that works will be commencing in the near future and that the budget is in place. Three people put themselves forward to form a subcommittee - a local group to continue with particular interest in fuel management issues in this area. It was noted there is individual responsibility to ensure the fuel break is kept clear, especially during summer. A CFA fire guard for the area could be formed.	
Group feedback: Shady Gully and Mortimers Paddock	Max Elliot: We discussed the need for slashing with the Council and DELWP representatives present, looking at who is responsible for it and being assured that this work will be maintained. For Mortimers Paddock, we heard about the historic values as well as its biodiversity. This area is low-risk, planned burns are not recommended, there could be further mulching around the edge. Discussion about Council works, funding is an issue, it was noted that Council receives money coming in from the Foreshore Camp Park. We also discussed high-risk vegetation around the town and the impact on residents who live near it. Lakeside Drive was discussed - this is part of Council's works too.	

<p>Group feedback: Western Front</p>	<p>Helen Bull: We discussed a lot of similar issues to the other groups. There is a past history around fuel management that has caused frustration, for example, promises about works such as planned burning being made but not carried out. Ross Cutlack pointed out that the drought affected this, at least to some extent. There is a need to make this happen this time around - 'action not talk'. We were assured by Ross we will see action soon via the JFMP process. There has never been a better time to ask for funding for fuel management works. There was broad agreement that we are on the right path with the plans for this area and plans like these can be taken back to committees, audited, and provided to the community. Carrying out planned burning when possible is important, once the fuel load is back to the right levels. Mulching can be carried out straight away. There are some concerns about mulch; it can be scattered by wind. However, the consensus was that we have to start somewhere, and with time the mulch may break down a bit and be less prone to getting blown around. Ross let us know that the JFMP will be signed off in September. We discussed another source of frustration about past history - works have been done in the past but then not maintained. This has highlighted that the need to maintain work that's been done must be acknowledged in resourcing.</p>	
<p>Meeting Close</p>	<p>Lyn Harwood: We got through a huge amount today. Notes have been taken about these discussions and these will be taken back to the Fuel Management group so we can pull out the major outcomes from this meeting, looking closely at planning, actions, and accountability. A summary from today will be written up and will be published in the Mallacoota Mouth and also on the MADRA website. Everyone's attendance and input today has been very much appreciated.</p> <p>Patsy Lisle: Thanks to all the volunteers in the group for their hard work over all this time.</p> <p>Meeting closed at 1.40pm.</p>	