

# Living with Bushfire: A Community Conference

Friday, 3 October - Sunday, 5 October, 2014

Federation University Australia, Gippsland Campus, Churchill, Victoria



**Living with Bushfire: A Community Conference** will explore the wide range of issues relating to fire and the effect it has on our community and natural resources.

## The event is a joint initiative of:

Federation University Australia  
Department of Environment and Primary Industries  
Country Fire Authority  
Latrobe City Council  
Parks Victoria

## About the conference

Living with bushfire is a reality in Gippsland and the resilience of the community relies on shared learnings and an understanding of how fire behaves, as well as its impact on the environment.

To explore the issues related to fires and the community, “**Living with Bushfire: A Community Conference**” will be held at Federation University Australia’s Gippsland campus in Churchill on **Friday 3 October and Saturday 4 October 2014**, with a separate field trip session taking place on **Sunday 5 October**.

The Gippsland region has a special connection to our forests and natural resources. Over two thirds of the Gippsland region is forested public land (National Parks or State Forests) with many small communities living in close proximity to these forests, but the risk of bushfire, exists right across the landscape and preventing fires from occurring and preparing for bushfires is everyone’s responsibility.

Over the past 15 years the area has experienced a number of significant bushfires causing loss of life and property. Both the response to and recovery from these events has required a team effort with everyone contributing and working together.

Various agencies are responsible for the management and suppression of bushfire in the landscape. Some also work with communities during recovery after fire. The knowledge gained by these agencies, by local people from Gippsland communities and from researchers over the past 15 years has changed how we approach fire. This information will be shared and discussed at a forum promoting interaction and knowledge exchange between agencies, the community and researchers.

Whilst the protection of life and property are of prime concern, bushfire also plays a significant role in the health of our forests and wildlife. How community members and our natural environment cope with fire are the principal themes of this conference

The conference will provide an opportunity for community members, fire agency staff, researchers and students to explore issues relating to fire in our region.

The conference aims to engage with all interested people and raise awareness in the community of the threat of bushfire and how best to prepare for the summer fire season. It also aims to provide a deeper understanding of the effect of fire on natural resources and to provide better opportunities for networking between researchers, agencies and the community.

## Conference themes

### 1. Fire and the environment

- How fire shapes our environment and our understanding of its impact
- How plants and animals recover after a fire event
- What research is taking place and how this can be used

### 2. Fire and the community

- Personal experiences gained over the past 15 years
- How at risk we are as a community and what we can do about it
- Understanding bushfire behaviour
- Research regarding household protection

## Conference Overview

The following is a brief outline of the agenda, it is subject to review and change as the event proceeds, the latest agenda will be maintained and updated on the conference webpage.

### Day 1 : Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> October

#### Theme: Fire and the environment

9am	Tea and coffee on arrival
9:30 am	Conference opening: Craig Lapsley, Fire Services Commissioner
10am	Fire behaviour : Kevin Tolhurst, Melbourne University Bushfire impact and building vulnerability : Justin Lesonard, CSIRO
11	Fire Ecology research
1pm	Lunch
2pm	Fire ecology, Carbon storage, impacts on water and indigenous use of fire
5.00 pm	Close of day one

The day will also feature displays and booths from various agencies and community groups.

**6:30pm**      **Conference Dinner : Waratah Restaurant Morwell**  
**Special guest speaker : TBA**

## Day 2

### Theme: Fire and the community

9am	Tea and coffee on arrival
9:30am	Opening address
10am	Natures response to Black Saturday : Steve Platt, DEPI
11am	Fire safety including refuges, house standards and planning controls
1pm	Lunch
2pm	Community behavioural research (Alan Rhodes, Federation University)
3:30pm	Experiences preparing and defending properties
4pm	Fire ready and living with bushfire champions : Euan Ferguson Chief Officer, CFA
4:30 pm	Conference close and review : Harry Ballis, Federation University

Plus hourly CFA led sessions on property protection from 11am to 3pm  
Concurrent community open house from morning tea onwards

## Day 3

### Field trips – limited numbers (40)

Fire Ecology : Optional field trip to inspect Department of Environment and Primary

CFA sponsored fieldtrip on development of bushfire protection plans for your property

## Become a conference sponsor

The conference will provide your organisation with excellent opportunities to promote your work and involvement in fire and land management, promote services you offer, and demonstrate your organisation's commitment to the Gippsland community.

The marketing potential of involvement in this event starts from the time you sign up and can continue well beyond the conclusion of the conference.

### Sponsorship will provide the following benefits:

- Wide exposure of your organisation resulting from extensive promotion of the conference
- Excellent networking opportunities during the conference to promote your organisation, its services or products
- An innovative way to showcase your organisation as a proactive member of the Gippsland community
- Distinguish your service or organisation and build relationships via a stall at the conference open-house sessions
- Promote and maintain brand awareness
- An opportunity to promote key messages or concerns your organisation has regarding the responsible management of bushfires and community recovery from such events

## Sponsorship opportunities and entitlements

A variety of levels of involvement are open to your organisation, and have been designed to offer a range of benefits allowing you to select the appropriate level of involvement that best meets your needs and resources.

### More information:

Please contact Peter West (Chair, Conference Partner Organisation Committee) on 0427 409 619 or [peter.west@depi.vic.gov.au](mailto:peter.west@depi.vic.gov.au) to discuss sponsorship packages.

### Register

The conference attendance fee is only \$20 per day, which includes lunch and refreshments.

**All details including registration are available from the following webpage** [www.federation.edu.au/fireconference](http://www.federation.edu.au/fireconference)

### More information

#### Peter West

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#### Dr Wendy Wright

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