

YOUR MEMBERSHIP MATTERS



Newsletter

7 February 2019

Firstly, the Committee hope you had a very happy Christmas and a break from your usual routine – even if it was only for a few days.

We are now into February – and with that comes the ever reminder of **Black Saturday** and the sadness that comes when we think of the beautiful families who lost their lives and others who lost their loved ones. We can only pray that history never repeats itself.

However – we now look at the bushfires engulfing Gippsland/East Gippsland/Northern Victoria/Westernport/Baw Baw Region/Thompson Dam Catchment etc. as well as the helicopter men going down whilst helping fight our fires. I believe the frightened people in those areas are experiencing their own ‘**Black Days**’ and we all start to feel that sense of uneasiness creeping in.

On Tuesday a **lightning strike at the end of Dee Road Millgrove** started a fire - thanks to our CFA it was extinguished quickly – but it could have had dire consequences.

Just to bring you up to date since our last Newsletter –

The Yellingbo Conservation Area Coordinating Committee (YCACC) has formally ended it’s 3-year term and has been disbanded as of January 31, 2019. An extract from the Convener, Anne Langworthy final report is as follows –

“...Our Minister, the Hon Lily D’Ambrosio, Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, and Minister for Solar Homes, has accepted the recommendations of an external review to replace YCACC with two committees:

- ***A coordinating committee of land managers (and community groups with land management responsibilities) focused on coordinating the land management works in the YCA; and***
- ***A broader-based community reference group designed to assist DELWP engage more effectively to win community support for YCA objectives whilst addressing community concerns.***

The external reviewer indicates that this provides two set of governance arrangements both largely reporting to and supporting DELWP who will have the responsibility now of implementing the VEAC recommendations in establishing the Yellingbo Conservation Area.”

What does that mean for us? We - your Committee – and you – our Members - will continue this fight to take our Upper Yarra area out of the YCA. This we will do together!

Whilst we have not been advised who the 'Land Managers' would be we can only assume they would be Melbourne Water, ZOOS Victoria, Parks Victoria, Environmental Groups and headed by DELWP. The 'Broader Based Community Groups' – your guess is as good as mine!

The 10 Year Draft Plan - As a group we sent in approximately 150 written submissions to this Plan. DELWP has now released their assessment of all the submissions and have failed to release individual details of your concerns. Their summary does not reflect your submissions. Surprised???

DELWP YCA Bushfire Risk Management Plan – this Plan has been released – the outcome of the DELWP assessment states there is no increase in bushfire risk with the rollout of the YCA. All local input and local fire history were excluded from this assessment. According to DELWP a complex computer modelling knows better!

Your Committee has reviewed this Bushfire Risk Management Plan. **PLEASE TAKE THE TIME TO READ THIS REVIEW AS IT CONTAINS INFORMATION YOU NEED TO BE AWARE OF.** Totally disregarding our fire risk history and the Black Saturday Royal Commission Recommendation prioritizing human life above all must be challenged.

The YWG will put out for public record our Review of this Bushfire Risk Management Plan and our sincere concerns for the safety of our Community given the unacceptable result of this Bushfire Risk Assessment.

Your Committee, on your behalf, are preparing and will send a '**Letter of Concern**' to the Premier; the Deputy Premier; the Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change, and Minister for Solar Homes; Heads of relevant Government Departments; and other personal involved in the YCA Project. As soon as this is completed, I will send a copy to everyone.

The YWG has just released a new website – www.firesafetyvictoria.net.au

This website focusses on Fire Safety in Victoria – it is informative, sad, frightening, heart warming and most of all a place where we can help each other – makes us remember we share this area we call home and a place we want to live in, feel safe in, bring up our children in, grow old in - a place worth fighting for.

I have attached '**A Timber Man's Story – by Peter McConachy** – on behalf of the Timber Industry.

Just noticed an article 'In Brief' Page 3 **Upper Yarra Mail 5 February 2019** title 'New Eyes in YCA' Please read this article – maybe a new chapter in our fight will begin!

This also reminds us to encourage your neighbors or friends to join our group – the more members we have the more pressure we can put on the Government to - **take us out of the YCA!**

Susan Hotton

On Behalf of the Yarra Waterways Committee

