

*“Before the threat becomes a reality”*

# *Macedon Bushfire Mitigation Plan*

**DRAFT**

## *a snapshot*

### **Vision**

*On days of extreme fire danger the Macedon community no longer lives in fear of a devastating inferno.*

### **Goals**

#### **Strategic fire breaks**

#### **A neighbourhood safer place**

#### **A fuel management program**

### **Objectives**

- ❑ To facilitate harvest of the primary school pine plantation and to explore options for development of the site as a community park
- ❑ To propose significant reduction in the fuel load of the Macedon Regional Park bordered by Nursery Road and Black Forest Drive
- ❑ To consult with the management of the Hancock pine plantation, north of the reservoir, regarding creation of a large fire break along the Southern boundary
- ❑ To assist with the establishment of a building protection zone around the Tony Clarke Stadium to reduce potential fire intensity
- ❑ To recommend removal of undergrowth along Middle Gully Creek from the Stadium upstream to the Nursery Road reservoir
- ❑ To upgrade the access road from Cable Street to the Reserve and create additional car parking spaces
- ❑ To advance implementation of the CFA fuel reduction plan along Macedon’s railway corridor.
- ❑ To request that a program of fuel management in and around the township is endorsed and implemented
- ❑ To promote appropriate fuel reduction on private properties

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## **Strategic fire breaks**

The effectiveness of firebreaks in slowing the progress and reducing the intensity of severe bushfires has been demonstrated by computer models and analysis of past fires. Public reserves and parklands are in the low fire risk vegetation category. Scattered deciduous trees enhance the landscaping in recreational locations.

### **Objectives**

□ ***To facilitate harvest of the primary school pine plantation & to explore options for development of the site as a community park***

The Macedon Primary School Pine Plantation covers about 13 acres, boarded by Cable and Bruce Streets, in the north of the town. There has been little or no thinning or maintenance of the plantation since it was created in 1986. Consequently, pine needles are thick on the ground and there are more than 100,000 dead lower branches circling the 8,000 small to medium tree trunks. The creek surrounding the plantation on three sides is overgrown with trees, shrubs, blackberries and weeds. In the event of a bushfire this site could generate an inferno in the most densely populated part of the town. Dr Roger Good, lecturer in Fire Science, NSW University described such pine plantations as “a huge standing crop of fuel”.

A longer term objective, after the pine trees have been harvested, would be to include the primary school plantation site into the Tony Clarke Recreation Reserve with a linked, walking/cycling track.

□ ***To propose significant reduction in the fuel load of the Macedon Regional Park bordered by Nursery Road & Black Forest Drive***

With current fuel loads, this park is regarded as a serious threat, particularly to the western half of the township. Significant reduction in fuel loads by removal of small trees, saplings and undergrowth plus the creation of a fire break along the southern boundary, are proposed strategies for reducing the risk of an intense bushfire.

□ ***To consult with the management of the Hancock pine plantation, north of the reservoir, regarding creation of a large fire break along the Southern boundary***

The large Hancock pine plantation, located north of the Nursery Road reservoir and west of Middle Gully Road, has been identified by CFA as posing a significant threat to the township. Justin Leonard, CSIRO Fire Science & Technology Laboratory recommends “the phasing out of pine plantations near towns”. Establishment a large firebreak, free of combustible material, along the southern boundary of the plantation north of the reservoir would attenuate the intensity of an emerging bushfire.

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## **A neighbourhood safer place**

A new concept that evolved out of the tragic Black Saturday bushfires. A NSP is an identified building or space within the community that may afford some protection from bushfire. It is a place of last resort in emergencies, eg, when escape routes are blocked by smoke induced traffic accidents. State government funding is available to achieve this objective and the project is to be managed by Council.

### **Objectives**

□ ***To establish a building protection zone around the Tony Clarke Stadium to reduce potential fire intensity***

The Stadium’s ability to withstand both radiant heat and ember attack would be substantially improved by:-

- Installation of bushfire shutters to all external glass windows and doors, one of which being operable from within the building.
- Installing a bushfire sprinkler system capable of delivering large volumes of water at high pressure to provide complete coverage of the building and surrounds. The large steel water tank, used to irrigate the oval, provides the water via a diesel pump and underground pipes. A return pipe, from the roof to the tank conserves water throughout the year.
- Removal of the trees in the front of the stadium and the saplings and undergrowth in the creek directly opposite the stadium entrance.

□ ***To recommend removal of undergrowth along Middle Gully Creek from the Stadium upstream to the Nursery Road reservoir***

The creeks surrounding Tony Clarke oval are infested with blackberry bushes, deadwood, saplings and litter. An ongoing cleanup program is recommended as an essential component of the NSP implementation plan.

□ ***To upgrade the access road from Cable Street to the Reserve and create additional car parking spaces***

Annual grading of the access roadway from Cable St to the Tony Clarke will provide a reliable second avenue of access to the NSP and additional car parking, well away from the stadium.

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## **A fuel management program**

Fuel reduction reduces the rate of development and the spotting potential of bush fires. Such programs involve removal of dead wood, undergrowth and leaf litter because it is the combination of lying and standing fuels that is required for an inferno. The lesson learnt from Black Saturday is that we invite disaster by failing to manage the fuel.

### **Objectives**

#### ***To advance implementation of the CFA fuel reduction plan along Macedon’s railway corridor***

Victorian railway land on both sides of the railway line, extending from Macedon northwards towards Woodend, has a high fuel load with considerable under-storey and leaf litter, due in part to the abundant rainfall during the past year. Fuel reduction along this corridor is a priority because of the potential for bushfire ignition. The Municipal Fire Management Planning Committee (MFMPC) has arranged for the CFA Vegetation Manager to draw up an ongoing program to achieve this objective.

#### ***□ To request that a program of fuel management in and around the township is endorsed and implemented***

MRSC/Parks/CFA should monitor fuel loads along roadsides, and other areas for which council is responsible, and arrange slashing/burning/mulching/pruning throughout the year to prevent accumulation of fuel. Honour Ave is an example of how well council can maintain a roadside. However the verges of Carrington St (the extension of Honour Ave), are overgrown with saplings, woody weeds and leaf litter. If there is less to burn there is a correspondingly lower bushfire threat.

#### ***□ To promote appropriate fuel reduction on private properties***

The strategic use of fuel reduction burning should be promoted as one of the few tools that can minimise bushfire damage. The MFMPC should monitor fuel loads and recommend control through mechanical means or prescribed burns and Council should ensure that landowners comply with fire prevention guidelines.