Phase Two Engagement Summary

Background

In Loddon Mallee, our planning process has been informed by collaborative work done with our multi-agency Safer Together Working Group and our LGA clusters.

We have built on the values and objectives established through previous processes and our engagement strategy has tested what we already know; encompassing new ideas from a wider range of stakeholders across the region and considering both public and private land risks.

We are also one of two regions in the state to be trialling strategic prevention and suppression strategies.

This document provides a quantitative and qualitative summary of the community feedback received during stage two of our engagement on the Engage Victoria website.

The summary of the feedback received in the phase one of the online consultation can be found on Engage Victoria at https://engage.vic.gov.au/bushfire-planning.

Engagement Process

This is the second of four planned opportunities for the community to provide online feedback using the Engage Victoria website on elements of the Loddon Mallee Strategic Bushfire Management Plan process.

During this period, we also held information stalls at farmers markets in the region, and ran two open houses, primarily for environmental groups.

Engagement Approach

Three draft strategy options were modelled and presented to the community via the Engage Victoria website. We presented the strategies in a plain English format to make them accessible for a wider audience.

The Engage Victoria website is one way to give opportunity for the community to have input into the planning process. Appendix 1 contains the full survey questions as shown on the Engage Victoria website.

Promotion

The Engage Victoria survey was promoted on social media of partner agencies involved in the planning process such as DELWP, CFA, PV, and local government. An email link was sent to community groups and individuals with an interest in bushfire management that had provided their details to agencies for this purpose. A media release was sent to media outlets throughout the regional footprint and postcards were distributed through local cafes in Bendigo and via local government.
Participants

113 Engage Victoria surveys were completed for the Loddon Mallee region in phase two. Ninety-three percent of the surveys were completed by people who live in the region. Thirty-seven percent of respondents found out about the survey through My CFA notifications, with email and social media the next most common means of communication.

Engagement Outcomes

The preferred strategy through the Engage Victoria survey was strategy C – Enhanced public land plus targeted private land. This strategy covers both public and private land. It includes tailored weather scenarios for each local council area and considers the likelihood of a bushfire starting at each weather scenario. It focusses on protecting townships and priority assets, considers access and egress routes to and from bushfire prone areas. It also considers ecological and cultural heritage values in a more nuanced way than strategy A.

The main reason people gave for liking this strategy was the protection of human life and the acknowledgement by the strategy that responsibility for managing bushfires goes across all land tenures.

“Shift in focus for fuel management to occur on private land instead of placing the burden just on public land, and greater emphasis on protecting environmental values.”

“Bushfire doesn’t discriminate between private and public land when it is going, so it only makes sense that any plan includes these blocks.”

“Makes community more responsible. It should be a joint venture to look after our environment. Helps educate the community.”

Sixty-four percent of people said this was their preferred strategy. Strategy B was the preferred strategy of twenty-four percent of respondents, while Strategy A was preferred by only twelve percent.
Managing vegetation on private land

The feedback from private land section of the survey will inform the direction of bushfire management approaches on private land and how fire agencies and land managers can better partner with community to reduce bushfire risk.

The following graph shows what actions respondents to the Engage Victoria survey undertake to currently reduce bushfire fuels on their property.

Figure one: What activities, if any do you currently undertake to reduce bushfire fuels on your property?
The following graphs show what support respondents to the Engage Victoria survey need to manage bushfire fuels on their own property.

Figure two: What support, if any would you need to manage bushfire fuels on your property?

The following shows what extent respondents to the Engage Victoria survey feel the following people are responsible for managing bushfire fuels on private property including their own property.

Figure three: to what extent do you think the following people are responsible for managing bushfire fuels on private property including your own property?
Prevention and Suppression Strategies

Loddon Mallee is a current trial region of extending strategic planning to include a risk-based approach to bushfire prevention and suppression activities. To assist development of these strategies, respondents were asked to rank a range of potential activities from most to least preferred.

The most preferred prevention strategies were education programs tailored to different sections of the community and increased patrols in forests, campgrounds and recreation areas on high risk days. The least preferred were arson prevention programs and increased fines for landholders who don’t clean up their properties.

For suppression strategies, respondents favoured building and maintaining more firebreaks and prepositioning aircraft for improved response times to high risk areas. The least favoured ideas were developing an app for landholders with suitable equipment to become first responders to bush/grass fires and paid CFA seasonal firefighters.

Free text comments from respondents in this section focussed primarily on the importance of prevention over suppression, particularly the need to educate and enable community members about managing fuels and preventing ignitions.

Next Steps

The results of this survey will be used by the multi-agency Safer Together Working Group and the technical strategic bushfire management planning team in refining fuel management strategy options to reduce bushfire risk.

Over the coming months, we will continue to model and refine strategies in response to community feedback. The final draft strategy will have risk analyses undertaken to assess the performance against each of our fundamental objectives with a projection 40 years into the future to ensure the sustainable delivery of our strategy over the long term.

The Loddon Mallee Strategic Bushfire Management Planning and Engagement team would like to thank all respondents for sharing their time, experience and expertise in responding to our community surveys.

More information

Online: https://www.safertogether.vic.gov.au/understanding-risk

Email: loddonmalleeSBMP@delwp.vic.gov.au
Appendix 1: Survey

Phase Two Strategy Consultation

Overview

The Loddon Mallee region occupies more than a quarter of Victoria. It has a diverse landscape and a wide range of industries operating across it.

Our planning team is developing a strategic bushfire management strategy which covers both public and private land. The team includes representatives from DELWP, CFA, Parks Victoria and local government.

Since we last heard from you, the team has been modelling risk and drafting strategy options for the new bushfire management plans.

As the Loddon Mallee region is so big and diverse, we have decided to present the draft strategy options by local government area (your local shire or city council).

The summary diagram below gives a brief description of each of our three draft strategy options overall. In the Document Library in the right-side bar of this page (or scroll to the bottom of the page if you're on a mobile device), we have a set of maps for each council area which show each draft strategy option. We want to hear your thoughts about the draft strategy options in all the council areas that are relevant to you (where you live, work and play).

We also want to hear from you about managing fuel on private land, and your thoughts about some other strategies we are trialling for prevention and suppression of bushfires.
Strategy Options

Strategy A

What is it?
This draft strategy option has been developed with fires starting under the worst possible weather scenario (Black Saturday conditions). Fuel management will mainly occur within national parks and state forests around townships and identified priority assets. In areas with high risk reduction potential fuel reduction activities (burning, slashing or mulching) will be intense and frequent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What would be the outcome (estimate only)?</th>
<th>Performance rating (out of 5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Value protected</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Protection of human life</td>
<td>★★★☆☆</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection of critical infrastructure</td>
<td>★★★★☆</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection of private property</td>
<td>★★★★☆</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection of cultural heritage</td>
<td>★★★★★</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection of local economy</td>
<td>★★★★★</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection of community cohesion, function and well-being</td>
<td>★★★★★</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection of environmental values and resilience</td>
<td>★★★★★</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Strategy B

**What is it?**

This draft strategy option has been developed with tailored weather scenarios for each local council area in mind. While bushfires at Black Saturday weather conditions will always be most destructive, these events are very rare. Fires under less ferocious conditions might be much more frequent, but still destructive as well. This strategy also considers the likelihood of a bushfire starting at each weather scenario. In addition to focusing on townships and priority assets, this strategy considers access and egress to these areas as well. Ecological values are more prominently reflected in this strategy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What would be the outcome (estimate only)?</th>
<th>Performance rating (out of 5)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protection of human life</td>
<td>🧑‍🚀👩‍🚀👨‍🚀👨‍🚀/administrative <img src="image" alt=".rating" /></td>
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<tr>
<td>Protection of critical infrastructure</td>
<td>📡 <img src="image" alt=".rating" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection of private property</td>
<td>🏡 <img src="image" alt=".rating" /></td>
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<tr>
<td>Protection of cultural heritage</td>
<td>👍 <img src="image" alt=".rating" /></td>
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<tr>
<td>Protection of local economy</td>
<td>💰 <img src="image" alt=".rating" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection of community cohesion, function and well-being</td>
<td>🌱 <img src="image" alt=".rating" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protection of environmental values and resilience</td>
<td>🌳 <img src="image" alt=".rating" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Strategy C

**What is it?**

This draft strategy option builds on draft strategy option B but considers fuel management outside national parks and state forests in addition. Where possible, and only with landowner’s consent, fuel management will be targeted at areas that have the highest risk reduction potential, regardless of land tenure. This strategy also takes access and egress to and from bushfire prone areas into account.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What would be the outcome (estimate only)?</th>
<th>Performance rating (out of 5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protection of human life</td>
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<tr>
<td>Protection of critical infrastructure</td>
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<tr>
<td>Protection of private property</td>
<td>🏡 🏡 🏡 🏡 🏡 🏡 🏡 🏡 🏡 🏡 🏡 🏡</td>
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<td>Protection of cultural heritage</td>
<td>🕵️‍♂️ 🕵️‍♂️ 🕵️‍♂️ 🕵️‍♂️ 🕵️‍♂️ 🕵️‍♂️ 🕵️‍♂️ 🕵️‍♂️ 🕵️‍♂️ 🕵️‍♂️ 🕵️‍♂️ 🕵️‍♂️</td>
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<tr>
<td>Protection of local economy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Protection of community cohesion, function and well-being</td>
<td>🌱 🌱 🌱 🌱 🌱 🌱 🌱 🌱 🌱 🌱 🌱 🌱</td>
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<tr>
<td>Protection of environmental values and resilience</td>
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</table>
Q1. For each Shire or City Council, which is your preferred strategy option?

The Loddon Mallee region is very large and diverse, and we recognise that what works in one location may not be what works in another. Below is your opportunity to select your preferred strategy option for each local council area you care about - just select which strategy option you prefer for that council area. You may answer for as many local council areas as you’d like, and leave any that you don’t want to answer for blank. Go to the Document Library (right-hand side bar on a computer or bottom of the page on a mobile device) to view the maps for your council area. Please note for Hindmarsh, Yarriambiack, Northern Grampians and Pyrenees Shires, the maps only cover the area that falls within Mallee or Murray Goldfields fire districts. Visit the Grampians page to comment on the southern parts of these shires.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shire/Council</th>
<th>Strategy Option A</th>
<th>Strategy Option B</th>
<th>Strategy Option C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mildura</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Swan Hill</td>
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<tr>
<td>Buloke</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Gannawarra</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loddon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Campaspe</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater Bendigo</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Central Goldfields</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mount Alexander</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Macedon Ranges</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindmarsh (Northern section)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yarriambiack (Northern section)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Northern Grampians (North East section)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pyrenees (Northern section)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q2. What do you like about your preferred strategy option?
Please specify which council your comment relates to if you selected a preferred strategy for more than one council.

Q3. What, if anything, would you change about your preferred strategy option?
You can leave this blank if there's nothing you'd change; or you're not sure. Please specify which council your comment relates to if you selected a preferred strategy for more than one council.

Q4. Is there anything else you would like to say about the other strategy options?
You can leave this blank if there’s nothing you want to say. Please specify which council your comment relates to if you selected a preferred strategy for more than one council.
This section of the survey will focus on bushfire fuel management on private land.

Bushfire fuels include anything that can burn in a bushfire, such as dried grass, shrubs, branches, sticks, bark and leaf litter. Bushfire fuel management can include activities such as slashing, burning, physical removal and mulching.

Your feedback will inform the direction of bushfire management approaches on private land and how fire agencies and land managers can better partner with community to reduce bushfire risk. It is very important to note that under the CFA Act, nothing can occur on your property without your informed consent.

Q5. What activities, if any do you currently undertake to reduce bushfire fuels on your property?
You may select as many of these activities that are relevant to you.

- Burning vegetation (including burn piles, stubble burns, other burning off)
- Mechanical activities (such as mowing, slashing and mulching)
- Grazing or browsing by animals (manage fuels by eating and/or compacting vegetation)
- Controlling weeds
- I do not manage bushfire fuels my property
- I do not have bushfire fuels on my property

Managing bushfire fuels can reduce risks to your property and the broader community.

Q6. How likely would you be to reduce bushfire fuels on your own property?

Q7. To what extent would you expect members of your community to reduce bushfire fuels on their property?
Q8. What support, if any would you need to manage bushfire fuels on your property?

- I need advice from CFA
- I need advice from my local council
- I would like self service information (e.g. a guidance pamphlet, online fact sheet)
- I need physical help and equipment
- I need support to navigate regulations and permits
- I am a neighbour to public land and I am interested in possibly including my property in public land fuel management works (e.g. planned burns)
- I would not need any advice or support
- Other (please specify)

Q9. To what extent do you think the following people are responsible for managing bushfire fuels on private property including your own property?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not at all responsible</th>
<th>Somewhat responsible</th>
<th>Mostly responsible</th>
<th>Solely responsible</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Myself</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>My community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire agencies (e.g. CFA, FFVMic)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Council</td>
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</table>
Prevention and Suppression Pilot Strategies

Loddon Mallee is a current trial region for extending strategic planning to include a risk-based approach to bushfire prevention (stopping fires from starting) and suppression (how we stop fires that have started).

It is likely the pilot strategy for bushfire prevention and suppression will take the form of risk based mapping. For example, identifying the riskiest places for bushfires to start, in order to focus management actions there. To assist us in developing this approach, we are interested in your opinion on how bushfire prevention and suppression actions could be improved.

Q10. Bushfire prevention actions - please rank these actions by dragging and dropping them in the right column, in order of how important they are to improve

- Increased patrols in forests, campgrounds and recreation areas on high risk days
- Increased fines for people who light fires on Total Fire Ban days
- Education programs tailored to different sections of the community
- Increased fines for landholders who don’t clean up their properties
- More investment in research and development for improved fire management solutions
- Arson prevention programs
Q11. Bushfire suppression actions - please rank these actions by dragging them in the right hand column, in order of how important they are to improve.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improve access and egress in new estates</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop an app for landholders with suitable equipment to become first responders to bush/grass fires</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preposition aircraft for improved response time to high risk areas</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paid CFA seasonal firefighters</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve knowledge across response agencies on potential local water points and access</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Build and maintain more firebreaks</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q12. Is there anything else you would like to say about prevention and suppression strategies?

Q13. What is your interest in bushfire management in the Loddon Mallee region?
- I live in the Loddon Mallee region
- I have a property in the Loddon Mallee region, but I live somewhere else
- I own/operate a business in the Loddon Mallee region
- I work or study in the Loddon Mallee region
- I am an emergency services volunteer in the area
- I am a community volunteer in the Loddon Mallee region
- I visit the area frequently
- I visit the Loddon Mallee region for recreation (e.g. bushwalking, trail riding, camping)
- I have past experience of bushfire in the area
- Other (please specify)

Q14. Is there anything else you would like to add?
Q15. How did you find out about this community consultation?

- Participated in phase one
- Social media
- Regional media – newspaper or radio story
- Advertisement
- Flyer/postcard
- My CFA email
- Agency websites (DELWP, CFA, Safer Together or local government)
- Word of mouth
- Email
- Other (please specify)

Postcode

Optional: Please provide your email address if you would like to receive a direct copy of your submission.
Privacy Collection Notice

The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning is committed to protecting personal information provided by you in accordance with the principles of the Victorian privacy laws.

Purpose

This Privacy Collection Statement relates to all submissions collected in relation to the strategic bushfire management planning process being conducted across Victoria. Agencies involved in fire management across Victoria have been charged with undertaking a strategic planning process to guide bushfire management actions on public and private land into the future. The agencies involved in this process are Forest Fire Management Victoria (FFM Vic), CFA, Local Government and Parks Victoria.

Forest Fire Management Victoria is providing administrative services to the consultation. FFM Vic is part of the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (the Department) and submissions will be managed in accordance with the Department’s Information Privacy Policy. The Department’s Information Privacy Policy can be viewed at www.delwp.vic.gov.au/privacy.

Use of your submission

The information you provide will be made available to the Strategic Bushfire Management Planning Teams involved in the planning process, including representatives from FFM Vic, CFA, Local Government and Parks Victoria.

This consultation is intended to give the community an opportunity to be involved in the strategic bushfire management planning process by providing information that informs the development of bushfire management strategies across Victoria. The consultation will be conducted in three phases:

- Phase 1: Strategic planning objectives
- Phase 2: Fire management strategies and actions
- Phase 3: Feedback on final results of planning process

If you freely and voluntarily provide any sensitive information under the Act in your submission, DELWP will consider that provision to be consent to collect the information and will then protect it under the Information Privacy Principles in the Act. Sensitive information is information relating to racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, membership of a political association or trade association/union, religious or philosophical beliefs or affiliations, sexual preference or criminal record.

You have the right to access and correct your personal information about you that is held by DELWP. Requests for access should be sent to the Manager Privacy, P.O. Box 500 East Melbourne 3002.