

It is imperative that the Ocean Grove Nature Reserve be properly managed and not let it get to the extremely dangerous situation it is currently in. A small amount of cold burning was done earlier this year, but it needs considerably more to be done. The Nature Reserve is an extreme potential danger to Woodlands Estate residents, with the potential to cost many lives due to bush fire. On an extremely hot day with a strong north wind, the danger could extend to the main part of Ocean Grove, which would have only two useable exits (as Grubb Road and Thacker Street would be closed in the event of a major fire) and the result could be a considerable death count.

David Packham, the retired CSIRO scientist, who is considered the foremost bushfire expert in Australia believes the Nature Reserve poses an extreme danger.

The authorities who control the Nature Reserve are now subject to OHS and Workcare requirements and may be subject to jail terms or extensive fines in the event of a major fire if the Reserve is not properly controlled and simply left as it is.

I suggest that the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners be allowed to conduct traditional burning of undergrowth and be allowed to plan and control the proper management of the Reserve. They are the Traditional experts and should be encouraged to manage the Reserve.