

MessageMatrix



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Bushfire Shorts **A snapshot of goings on in the world of bushfire**

Margaret River bushfire

Twenty-eight houses were destroyed in a bushfire in the Margaret River region of WA, south of Perth. The fire broke out from a controlled burn being undertaken by the Department of Environment and Conservation in a national park.

BMO and 10/30, 10/50 rule changes

The Victorian Government has released new planning provisions for bushfire protection. The provisions include the replacement of the Wildfire Management Overlay with a Bushfire Management Overlay and provisions for vegetation management in areas of bushfire risk. Read our feature article below for more information.

Techno

The Federal Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research has released an iPad app MyBizShield to assist business owners to prepare an emergency management and recovery plan. A template for those without an iPad is available to download from www.business.gov.au

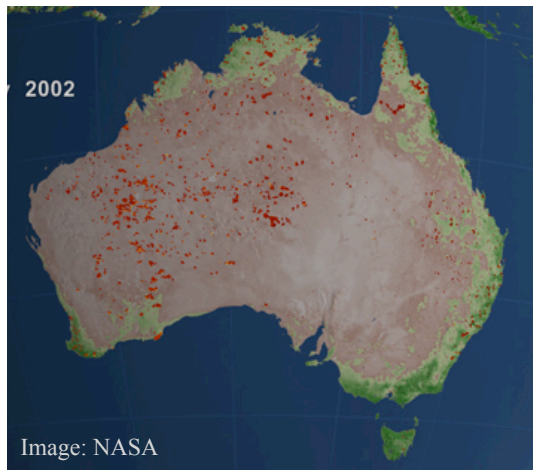


Image: NASA

The Attorney-General's Department has developed the DisasterWatch app for smart phones, providing information about disaster related events in Australia.

A GPS enabled FireReady app for smart phones has been released by the CFA. The app provides up-to-date information on bushfire warnings, and current fires, and allows users to automatically locate themselves using GPS to see any fire

activity in their local area. Users can also contribute information by uploading images.

Wilsons Promontory

A team of 70 scientists and rangers from Museum Victoria and Parks Victoria undertook a two week survey of Wilsons Prom NP to assess fauna populations following large bushfire and flood events in the past few years. The findings were very positive on the recovery of the Prom, with more than 700 animal species, including 500 insect and spider species, 95 bird species, 20 mammal species and nine fish species recorded. A number of new moth species were discovered, as well as a populations of animals never recorded at the Prom before.

Black Saturday arson

A man charged for intentionally and recklessly starting the Churchill bushfire has been released on strict bail conditions until his next court appearance in February.

Charges against two teenagers accused of lighting the fire in Bendigo have been dropped due to insufficient evidence. Earlier, a jury found the pair unfit to stand trial as they both suffer mild to moderate intellectual disabilities.

NASA - A decade of fires

NASA have created animations of fire observations from satellite data for Australia, Africa, Asia, North America and South America over the last decade. It is amazing to see just how many fires there are each year. Check them out at www.nasa.gov/mission_pages/fires/main/modis-10

Bushfire CRC new award

The Bushfire CRC have introduced the Research Utilisation Award to acknowledge agencies that make an outstanding use of Bushfire CRC research. The award will be presented at the annual AFAC-Bushfire CRC conference.

AFAC-Bushfire CRC Conference

The call for papers for the 2012 AFAC-Bushfire CRC annual conference is now open. The theme for this years conference is 'Diverse country. Common ground'. Submissions and registrations can be done at the conference website www.afac2012.org

Laser binoculars

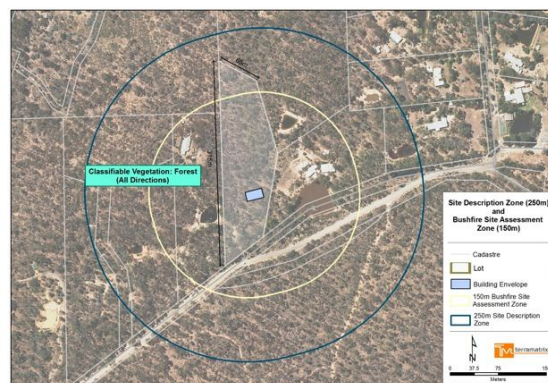
The defence firm BSE Systems has donated laser binoculars to the CFS to aid in the detection and locating of smoke plumes.

Wading through the new bushfire planning and building regulations

The Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission (VBRC) devoted a significant proportion of their findings and recommendations to planning and building. Chapter 6 of the report details their findings and recommendations, which set out to:

- Prioritise the protection of human life;
- Increase the consideration of bushfire in the planning process;
- Strengthen and clarify State guidelines on planning decisions;
- Increase the integration of the planning and building systems; and
- Strengthen community resilience to bushfire through the planning system.

Over the past few months a number of changes have occurred to the Victorian planning and building systems to meet the recommendations of the VBRC.



Bushfire Prone Areas

In October the Building Amendment (Bushfire Construction) Regulations 2011 were released, giving the Minister of Planning power to designate Bushfire Prone Areas (BPAs). New Bushfire Prone Area maps were released, with almost 85% of Victoria designated as bushfire prone (the maps can be downloaded from www.dpcd.vic.gov.au). Where a property sits within a BPA, all building (renovation or new developments) must be assessed under AS3959-2009 to determine a Bushfire Attack Level (BAL) construction standard. A minimum construction standard of BAL-12.5 applies.

Victorian Planning Provisions

Bushfire Management Overlay

The Victorian Planning Provisions (VPP) were amended in November to include clause 44.06 - Bushfire Management Overlay and clause 52.47 - Bushfire Protection: Planning Requirements.

The BMO replaces the Wildfire Management Overlay (WMO) in the VPP. Initially the BMO covers all areas that were in the WMO. An assessment of further areas that should be subject to the BMO is currently underway with the Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD) working with the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV), councils, the CFA and DSE. Councils are also able to include local content about the nature of bushfire behaviour and risk in a schedule to the overlay.

Applications for new development in a BMO area are required to undertake a Bushfire Site Assessment to determine siting, defensible space, building construction standard (i.e BAL), and requirements for access and water supply. The Bushfire Site Assessment can be done either by following the approach in Section 2 of AS3959-2009, applying the standard defensible space distances and construction levels in clause 52.47 (Tables 1 or 2) OR using an alternative method approved by the fire service. The BMO explicitly states that development in areas where the risk to life, property and community infrastructure from bushfire cannot be brought down to an acceptable level, should not proceed.

Planning permits issues under the BMO will include a mandatory condition requiring that all bushfire measures set out in the permit are to be maintained by the homeowner.

Vegetation management exemptions

Clause 52.48 Bushfire protection: Exemptions (under amendment VC83) of the VPP sets out exemptions across most of Victoria, that allow for the removal, destruction or lopping of vegetation to reduce the fuel load around existing buildings.

The 10/30 rule is applied to any dwelling in Victoria constructed; approved by a planning permit; or approved by a building permit before 10th September 2009. It allows for:

- The removal, destruction or lopping of any vegetation within 10 metres of an existing building used for accommodation; and
- The removal, destruction or lopping of any vegetation, except for trees, within 30 metres of an existing building used for accommodation.

The 10/50 rule is applied to existing buildings in Victoria within the designated Bushfire Management Overlay and constructed; approved by a planning permit; or approved by a building permit before 10th September 2009. It allows for:

- The removal, destruction or lopping of any vegetation within 10 metres of an existing building used for accommodation; and
- The removal, destruction or lopping of any vegetation, except for trees, within 50 metres of an existing building used for accommodation.

Positions vacant!

Join the TerraTeam

We are seeking to fill a number of new positions in our Melbourne office.

We are looking for:

- A **Program Leader** for our **Bushfire Planning and Design** services. You might be a land use planner or have worked for a referral authority, and will have several years experience in dealing with bushfire related planning and building controls. The role will involve coordination of our Bushfire Planning and Design services (including BMO, BAL, and more strategic bushfire safety input into PSPs, planning scheme amendments etc.); management of individual projects; and leadership to Analysts working within this area.
- **Fire Management Analysts** with backgrounds in natural resource management, forestry, ecology or community safety. We undertake a raft of projects dealing with bushfire risk assessment, reserve fire management, land use planning, research, and training development and delivery. Our Analysts conduct fieldwork across Victoria, analyse potential bushfire behaviour and impact on dwellings and other assets, and write management plans and reports. You will work as part of a small project team and may be asked to manage some projects and clients under the guidance of the relevant Program Leader.
- A **Technical Officer** who will support our team of Analysts with field data collection, data management, and maintenance of fieldwork equipment. You might be a recent graduate or studying part-time in a discipline such as natural resource management, ecology, or forestry. Experience in data collection in the field would be an advantage and, whilst this is an entry-level position, there is opportunity to progress to an Analyst position depending upon experience and performance.

Position Descriptions can be obtained by contacting us on (03) 9417 2626 or elise@terramatrix.com.au (but don't feel constrained by them!). We take a holistic approach and value a diversity of qualifications and experience.

Remuneration packages will be negotiated reflecting your qualifications and experience.

Enquiries to Jon Boura, Director, 0407 773 331 jon@terramatrix.com.au