

# Bushfire Education Centre

## Narbethong

A Bushfire Education Foundation Inc. Project

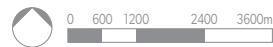


View from Maroondah Highway. Artists impression only.

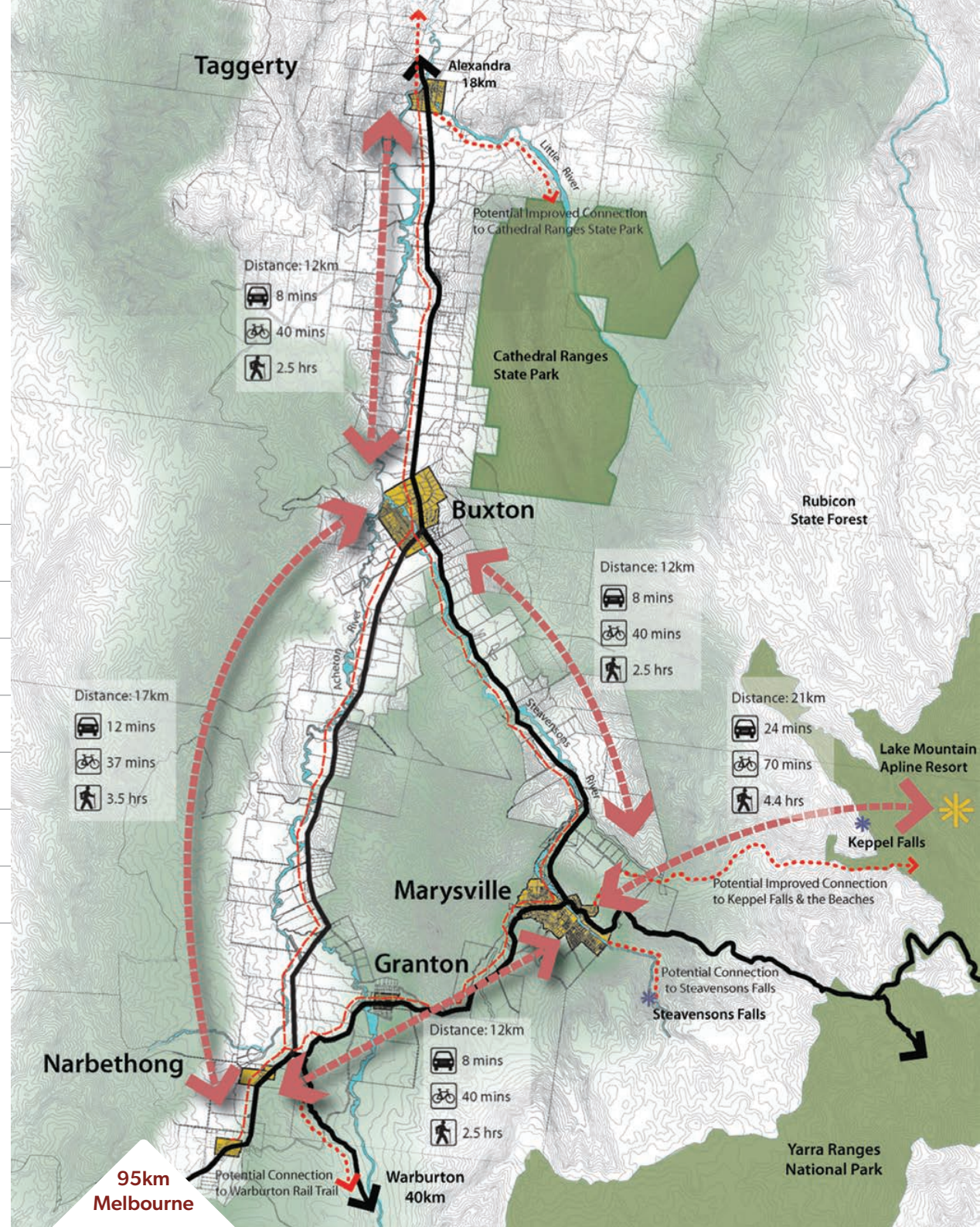


# Site Regional Context

## LEGEND



	Township/Village
	State Park/Regional Park
	Bushland Extent
	Lake Mountain Alpine Resort
	Recreation Destinations
	Distance between Villages
	Major Road
	Potential Improved Connections
	Proposed Triangle Trail Network
	River



# Project

The Bushfire Education Foundation Inc. was established in 2013 with the primary purpose to provide education on bushfire prevention, safety and recovery for the general community. To achieve our primary purpose, of establishing a 'World Class' **Bushfire Education and Exhibition Centre**, we are seeking expressions of interest from stakeholder groups, including Government, Corporations, Philanthropic bodies, Service Clubs, and sponsors to build the Centre on the fire damaged Pine Mill site, Maroondah Highway, Narbethong, Victoria in the Murrindindi Shire.

## CONTACT:

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bef.net.au

## PROJECTED COST

Stage **1** – purchase of the site and clean-up.

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Stage **2** – repair of damaged outbuildings and site preparation.

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Stage **3** – building the centre and site environmental development.

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*Estimated cost: \$5.0 million.*





## FIRE PREPARATION RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

Following the Royal Commission into the 2009 Victorian Bushfires there were a number of recommendations which have informed the plans for the Bushfire Education Centre

### **Extract Page 55 - 1.11.1 School Education**

Inquiries into bushfires in Australia have repeatedly found that teaching school children about fire is fundamental to improving community bushfire safety.

...educating children about the history of fire in Australia and about safety in the event of a bushfire will probably influence not only the children but also their parents, siblings and extended family and community.

Engendering in school children an understanding of bushfire and the attendant risks should be seen as important as ensuring that all Australian children learn to swim.

Remembering an event such as Black Saturday is important, not only for paying tribute to the people who died and those who came to the assistance of others, but also for ensuring that the survival lessons as learned of the event are not lost.

### **Extract Page 56 - 1.11.2 Remembering**

Educating the community about the risks of fire and the ways people can protect themselves is a long-term project... Memorials, museums and monuments can play an important part in creating a community that remembers and recognises the risks bushfires have posed and will continue to pose for all Victorians and thereby make community members more receptive to education and more willing to take action to properly prepare themselves.



**Governor of Victoria**  
*Prof. David de Kretser AC*



**Chairperson**  
*The Hon. Bernard Teague AO*



**Commissioner**  
*Susan Pascoe AM*



**Commissioner**  
*Ronald Mcleod AM*

## About Royal Commissions

In the Australian system of government, a Royal Commission is the highest form of inquiry on matters of public importance. They are “connected with the peace, order and good government of the Commonwealth, or public purpose or any power of the Commonwealth” according to the Royal Commissions Act 1902.

## 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission

The Commission recognised that “It will not be easy to maintain the focus on Bushfire safety over time. Community memory of ferocious fires can fade because of the relative infrequency of such events ...there is a risk of individual and collective underestimation of the risk and possibly complacency. Teaching bushfire history and safety in schools is important for maintaining community memory and awareness.”

## Recommendation 6

That Victoria lead an initiative of the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs to ensure that the national curriculum incorporates the history of bushfire in Australia and that existing curriculum areas such as geography, science and environmental studies include elements of bushfire education.

*2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission Final Report Summary July 2010*



## 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission

**FIRE PREPARATION  
RESPONSE AND RECOVERY**

# President's Message



**Barry Thomas**

President, Bushfire Education  
Foundation Inc

“Creating a bushfire education resource that will serve and educate future generations to better prepare for our changing environment”

The start of this project goes back over 50 years. As a young freelance news cameraman, I attended many fires – both grass and bush. One fire stood out. On 8 January 1969, 17 people died as a result of a grass fire on Geelong Road at Lara. I was first on the scene after the fire passed. My thoughts on the day were that these people should not have been trapped on one of our major highways.

Move forward to 7 February 2009 ‘Black Saturday’, where 173 people died. This fire gave me the opportunity to build a database of visual information around bushfires for education and to reduce the impact of bushfires on our society. It started out as a community hobby / project. From 25 February 2009, I started recording the aftermath and recovery at Marysville, Kinglake, Flowerdale and Strathewen. Over the following years bushfire education became more important as schools and the public started to come to the fire areas to learn more about bushfires

The 2019–20 bushfire season saw unprecedented temperatures and drought lead to thousands of out of control fires that destroyed more than 3,500 homes, thousands of buildings and 34 lives were lost. More than 18 million hectares (45 million acres) were burnt, forests, woodlands and wildlife habitats destroyed, water supplies polluted dramatically and communities devastated. The 2020 Commonwealth Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements Report, made recommendation: 10.1 Disaster education for individuals and communities, calling for State and Territory Governments to... “continue to deliver, evaluate and improve education and engagement programs aimed at promoting disaster resilience for individuals and communities.” And we must not forget the mental anguish associated with bushfires – for both the community and emergency responders. Stark reminders of how important it is that Australians understand and learn to live with bushfire.

**I invite you to join the BEF in the establishment of a ‘World Class’ Bushfire Education Centre.**

# Site Options

## **OLD NARBETHONG PINE MILL – PREFERRED SITE**

Situated at the foot of the Black Range State Forest the old mill site provides a unique opportunity for students, community groups and researchers to explore land management issues.

The proximity of the site to Camp Marysville (Outdoor Education Group) is also a major consideration due to the emphasis on practical and active excursions related to the Environment and Bushfire Education.

## **MARYSVILLE**

The old Marysville Bowling Club land is around .80 hectares (2 Acres) and there is potential to acquire a further .20 hectares (.5 Acres) if the adjoining, historic Crossways Country Inn is factored in. However, due to the parking requirements of large school buses (often three at one time) and the preferred design of the education centre buildings, the site is not the preferred option.

The land occupied by the Mary-Lyn Holiday Resort is a substantial piece of real estate that would accommodate the Bushfire Education Centre buildings and bus and car parking. However, its proximity to residential developments and the cost of purchase are considered prohibitive.

## **KINGLAKE**

Various sites were considered in Kinglake including the new Kinglake Village. While an interesting development there is a strong preference for a stand-alone site, for many reasons, including site control and flexibility, project identity and the financial structure of the project.

## **STRATHEWEN AND FLOWERDALE**

Considered an option due to the wonderful work of key people in Strathewen, potential sites were assessed. However, due to the limited tourist traffic these towns were not the ideal options.

# Vision

To establish a 'World Class' Bushfire Education Centre...

A place that provides information and education regarding the bushfire events in Victoria's history.

A national asset – connected to all Australian schools through digital technology.

A destination for tourists, public and school groups.

An experience that shares best practice responses and research to plan for a better future.

A gateway to the villages of the Murrindindi Shire.





# Bushfire Education Centre: Showcase Building Brief

STAGE ONE INDOOR SPATIAL ALLOCATION		CAPACITY
Classroom / Gallery 1	<b>120m<sup>2</sup></b>	(120 children seated on the floor)
Gallery 2	<b>50m<sup>2</sup></b>	(50 seniors seated)
Virtual Experience	<b>20m<sup>2</sup></b>	(10 people seated)
Library	<b>20m<sup>2</sup></b>	
Meeting Room 1	<b>15m<sup>2</sup></b>	(10-12 people)
Meeting Room 2	<b>12m<sup>2</sup></b>	(8-10 people)
Café	<b>50m<sup>2</sup></b>	(additional outdoor dining area)
Amenities	<b>40m<sup>2</sup></b>	(male, female and ambulant toilets)
Storage	<b>15m<sup>2</sup></b>	
<b>SUB TOTAL</b>	<b>342m<sup>2</sup></b>	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>350m<sup>2</sup></b>	(allowing for circulation)
Outdoor Entry	<b>200m<sup>2</sup></b>	(outdoor amphitheatre / entry space)



# Preferred Site

## 649 Maroondah Hwy, Narbethong



ANDERSON LANE

MAROONDAH HIGHWAY



# Showcase Building Concept Plan

The Narbethong Bushfire Education Centre aims to capture the narrative, and share the learnings of the Black Saturday fires and past fires by providing a space where visitors and locals alike can reflect, understand and learn from these events.

The design of the centre incorporates elements within the built form and landscape to reflect this story and provide a space that can grow and expand over time. The proposed curved structure (2) which wraps around the existing building on the site reflects the indigenous landscape wrapping itself around all elements that have since been added to the land, and the black cladding and sculptural form (1) is homage to what was left behind from the fires.

The contrasting new landscape and pockets of greenery (3) reflect new life and the recovery from the traumatic fires. The inclusion of different spaces made up in both the existing building on site and the proposed new additions (4-8) capture both the natural habitat and new spaces, which provide areas to sit and be with nature, to unwind and look within for self reflection and provide opportunities to learn from the past, while looking to the future.

The thematic entry and journey into the centre (9) hopes to capture a timeline of what has gone before us, and provide visitors to the centre a timeline and history of the fires, and a glimpse of what they will find within the centre.

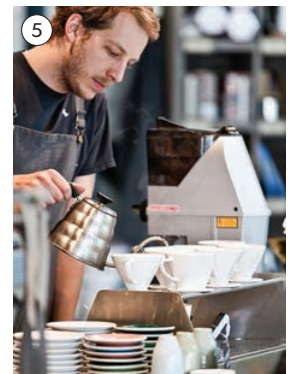
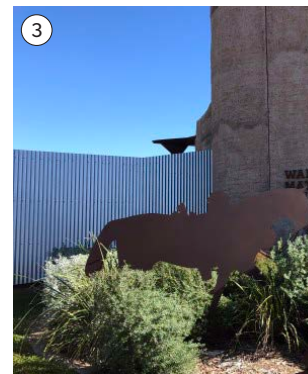
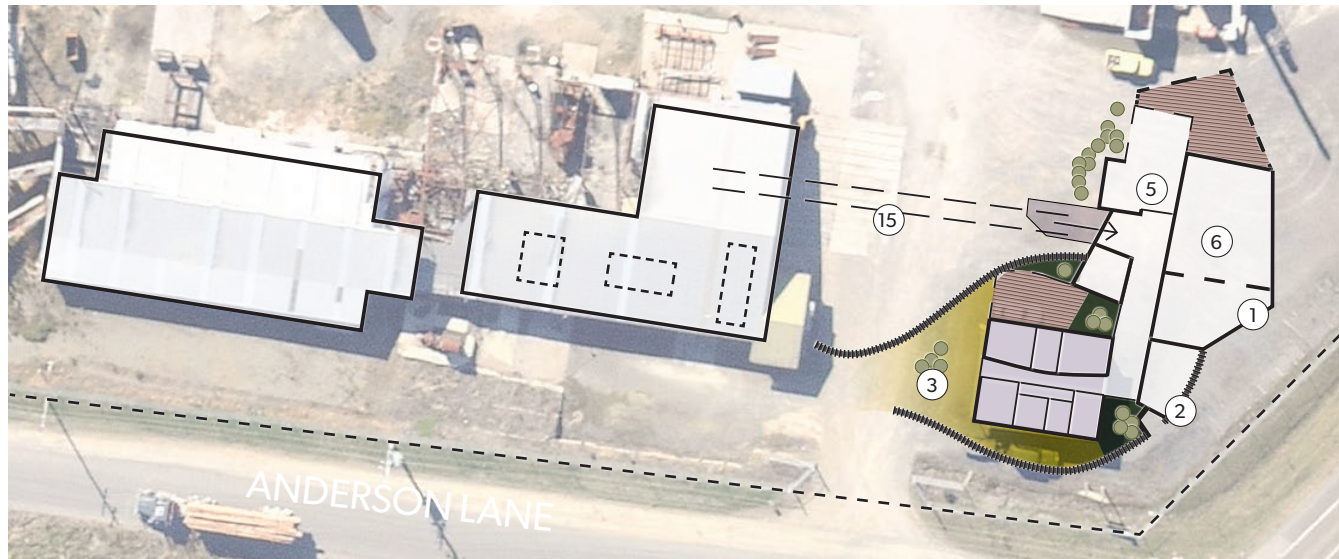


- 1 – Location for sculptural element
- 2 – Curved sculptural wall
- 3 – Landscape / sculptural pockets
- 4 – Virtual Experience
- 5 – Cafe
- 6 – Gallery 1
- 7 – Gallery 2
- 8 – Library (with sculptural tower above)
- 9 – Outdoor deck area

- 10 – Meeting room 1
- 11 – Storage
- 12 – Meeting room 2
- 13 – Amenities
- 14 – Outdoor cafe space
- 15 – Information walkway
- 16 – Covered entry
- 17 – Foyer



# Bushfire Education Centre: Showcase Building Design Rationale + Character





# Site Plan Themes + Spaces

## ARRIVE...



1. Threshold/ Entry



2. Information walkway/ story wall

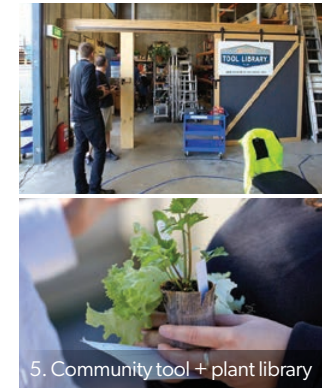
## GATHER...



3. Seating/ informal spaces



4. Cafe/ shared spaces



5. Community tool + plant library



6. Existing buildings [improved] + new buildings: education and training spaces



7. New buildings: resource, gallery, education, training + event spaces



8. Best practice building + landscape demonstration



9. Temporary exhibitions/events

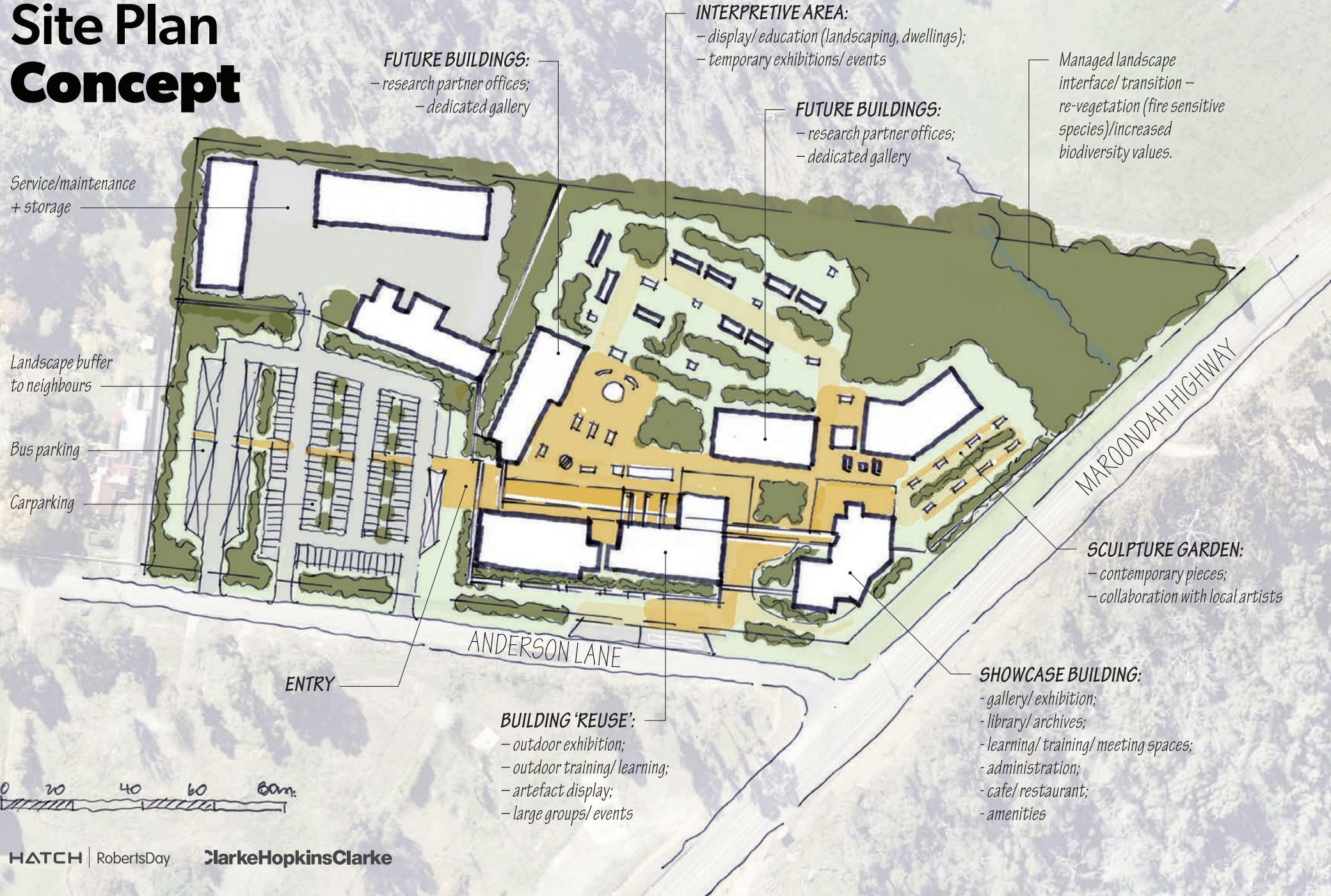


10. Sculpture gardens

## LEARN, INTERPRET + INNOVATE...



# Site Plan Concept





# Bushfire Education

## A School Perspective



**Jane Hayward** AM PSM  
Principal  
Strathewen Primary School

Involving our young people in bushfire programs is invaluable. We live in a state which has a long history of major bushfire events and for our students to have an insight into these events and an understanding of bushfire risk, behaviour, management, preparedness, impact and recovery is vital.

Historically children and young people have been overlooked in the planning and preparation for natural disasters. For a long time we have underestimated their capacity and yet equipping our young children with skills and knowledge is crucial. We know that young people can play a vital role in preparing for and recovering from bushfire.

Children learn through being immersed in highly engaging, rich learning environments. Seeing and hearing first hand accounts of bushfire experience and learning about our state's bushfire history in a purpose built facility maximises learning potential.

### BUSHFIRE EDUCATION CONSIDERATIONS:

**The science of fire** – sharing essential knowledge about fire, how bushfires occur and how they behave in the Victorian environment

**Our role** – the steps individuals, families and the community can take to prepare for the bushfire season and minimise the risk

**Bushfire safety** – the nature of the danger and the recommended strategies for staying safe when bushfires threaten

Building resilience in young people is important in equipping them to manage the challenges life presents. An awareness of the importance of Disaster Resilience Education is growing, as Australian communities continue to manage natural disasters every year.

# Key Educational Components

The leadup to a bushfire

Communications

Weather – Drought

Past fires

The day a bushfire starts

Aftermath of bushfires

Recovery – Communities

Recovery – Forest

Fire plans



# GTAV Study



gtav

The Geography Teachers' Association of Victoria has had a long association with Barry Thomas. In the wake of the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires, many schools have undertaken fieldwork to evaluate the impacts of fires of this nature for short and long term studies.

Many of our school members have brought their students to Marysville, exploring of the impact of fires and the recovery of the region – an essential curriculum study component.

The GTAV is excited and pleased that a Bushfire Education Centre is likely to be developed into a more permanent and dedicated structure which we endorse.

At present bushfire is a major topic of study at many levels of the Victorian Curriculum. The Scope and Sequence document for the Victorian curriculum outlines both skills and knowledge which specify Bushfire as a topic. The VCE Study Design, Unit 1 (Hazards) specifies the study and fieldwork, of which Bushfires is a major choice of Victorian schools.



This table specifies the Victorian Curriculum knowledge component:

Level 5 & 6	(VCGGK095)	Impacts of bushfires or floods on environments and communities, and how people can respond
Level 8	(VCGGK119)	Human causes of landscape degradation, the effects on landscape quality and the implications for places
Level 10	(VCGGK145)	Environmental, economic and technological factors that influence environmental change and human responses to its management
VCE Unit 1 Hazards	Area of Study 1	The student should be able to analyse, describe and explain the nature of hazards and impacts of hazard events at a range of scales
VCE Unit 1 Hazards	Area of Study 2	The student should be able to analyse and explain the nature, purpose and effectiveness of a range of responses to selected hazards and disasters

Of these, the major study, appropriate to the Black Saturday fires, is the Unit 1 Hazards course. It is estimated that over 30 schools directly used the Marysville region in 2019.

The GTAV thanks Mr Thomas for the ongoing championing of understanding about the Black Saturday fires, such as his presentations directly to schools and at events such as the GTAV Annual Conference. Bushfire education is very important and this proposed Bushfire Education Centre would contribute strongly to that education.

**Leticia Delmenico**

Executive Officer

**Jane Bellamy**

Education Officer



# Nearby Study Sites



*(above)* Stevensons Falls provide an opportunity to observe Victoria's highest waterfall (84m) and the recovery of the natural environment following the fires

*(right)* Keppel Lookout offers students the unique opportunity to study the recovery of the environment after a bushfire.





# Alpine Study Sites



Nearby Lake Mountain Alpine Resort. The long-term effects of bushfires are still evident.

Lake Mountain is part of the Great Dividing Range – Australia's largest mountain range – stretching more than 3,500 Kilometres. The dominant Snow Gums take a very long time to recover from fire due to the cool climate and snow restricting growth in winter.



# Practical Field Research



*RMIT Master of Disaster, Design  
and Development – Marysville 2016*

RMIT have developed a Master Degree in Disaster, Design and Development which sits within the school of Architecture and Urban Design. The focus is on both local and international disasters and has been developed in collaboration with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), World Vision International and UNHabitat and UNHCR. The proposed BEC provides an ideal venue for practical field trips.





# Displays

Indoor and outdoor displays give students and home owners ideas on how to better protect their property in the event of a bushfire.



Created for the RMIT "Shelter on Kindness" exhibition 2009 the 4m-high contemporary Japanese teahouse house was designed by internationally renowned Japanese architect Professor Terunobu Fujimori using burnt timber gathered from bushfire affected parts of Victoria (now dismantled in storage)



*Fire Retardant Garden displays give ideas on how to better protect property*

# Technology



The way we gather information has changed. With direct contact via new media the Bushfire Education Centre can connect with students around Australia.



Students gather information from articles, databases and displays at the Bushfire Education Centre using their personal devices.



The use of drones to explore local forest for live aerial photography.



Interactive touch screens allowing students to manipulate and interact with data Example: selecting the key items they would put into their "fire ready kit".



# Acknowledgements



**FRRR**  
Foundation for Rural  
Regional Renewal



ARCHITECTS  
WITHOUT  
FRONTIERS

**HATCH** | RobertsDay

**Clarke  
Hopkins  
Clarke**

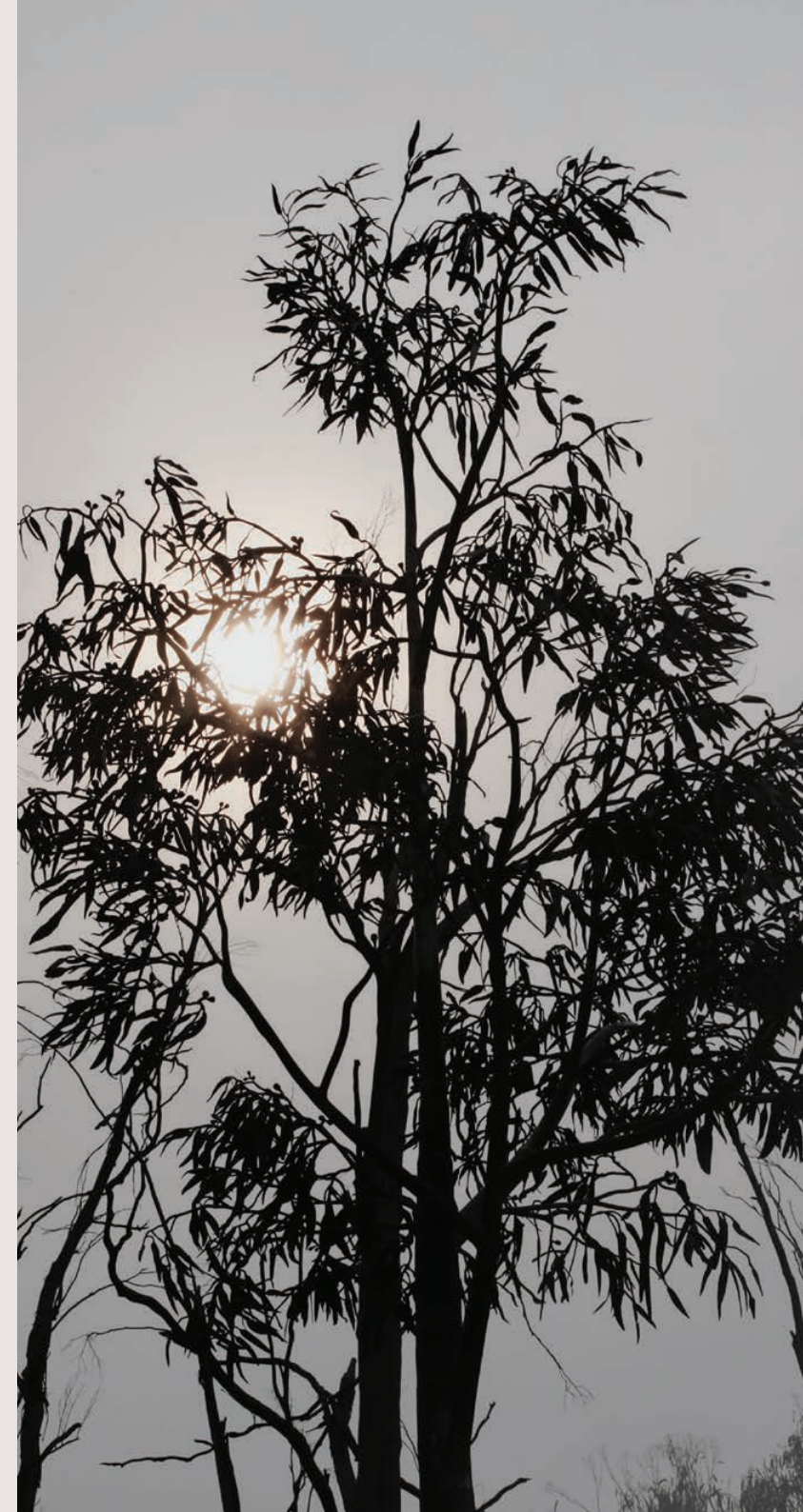


**gtav**

Paul Cross – Associate Teacher – Monash University, Education Department

Jane Hayward – AM PSM, Principal, Strathewen Primary School

The Bushfire Education Foundation Inc would like to thank the people of Marysville and Narbethong for participating in our consultation phase.







# The Tree Project Strathewen Victoria

A permanent Memorial to remember the people lost to the devastating Black Saturday fires of 2009 and our brave CFA men and women who battled the elements to protect our towns, the Australian Blacksmiths Association (Victoria) Inc. invited blacksmiths from across the country and around the world to contribute to the creation of a steel gumtree.

*The Blacksmiths' Tree, was erected on February 14, 2014.  
Five years in the making, 10m high it stands at the Peter Avola  
Memorial Pavilion, 160 Chadds Creek Road, Strathewen, Victoria.*