

MEDIA RELEASE

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Your water supply in a bushfire

East Gippsland Water is urging customers not to rely solely on mains water to protect their property against a major bushfire this summer and to carefully consider how they might manage without that supply.

The warning comes as weather forecasters and firefighters reiterate predictions of a long-hot summer, with thoughts of bushfires never far away.

Said East Gippsland Water's Managing Director, Bruce Hammond: "Mains water supplies are essentially designed to cater for everyday domestic water needs and may not cope with bushfire events.

"We will do all we can to keep drinking water flowing to households. We have back-up generators located at critical sites across the region, such as water treatment plants and pump stations, and these generators will come into operation should the electricity supply fail.

"We are also keeping our water storages as close to full as possible to cope with sudden increases in supply.

"Despite these contingencies, excessively high levels of water consumption and any possible damage to the water supply network during an extreme fire event, will mean the mains water supply is operating under extreme load.

"In addition, situations may prevent our staff from entering a bushfire zone to get to our infrastructure, which in turn may prevent us from maintaining normal drinking water pressure, quality or an uninterrupted water supply to every household.

'It's important therefore that customers carefully consider the availability of alternative water supplies to them if required, such as tank water. Alternatively customers may choose to leave their properties rather than stay and defend.'

Please note that in situations where a bushfire poses an imminent threat to property, any rules relating to water use are automatically waived.

Visit the CFA website www.cfa.vic.gov.au/plan-prepare for free information and advice about preparing your family and property for a bushfire, or call the Victorian Bushfire Information Line on 1800 240 667. For emergency warnings about bushfires visit the website www.emergency.vic.gov.au.

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