

MEDIA RELEASE

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Your water supply in a bushfire

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

This warning comes as we see an earlier than usual start to the fire season and weather forecasters predicting a long, hot summer ahead.

Said East Gippsland Water's Managing Director, Bruce Hammond: "While we have comprehensive measures in place to maintain drinking water supplies wherever possible in the event of bushfires, town water systems are only designed to cater for everyday domestic drinking water needs and may not cope with significant fire events. Customers should consider being prepared with another source of water like a swimming pool or dam filled with water.

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

"We will also be keeping our water storages as close to full as practical over summer to cope with sudden increases in water demand that might occur.

"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 town 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."

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

Visit the CFA website 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 emergency.vic.gov.au or cfa.vic.gov.au.

Ends