

**Victorian Parliamentary Inquiry Hearing at Euroa on
21 July 2016**

Inquiry into Fire Season Preparedness

Greater Shepparton City Council response

In terms of a general overriding comment, GSCC would be satisfied with how DELWP, including Parks Victoria, undertakes its fire season preparedness within the municipality. In support of this Council offer the following:

- DELWP managed fire risk using a hectare-based target strategy that included the development of Fire Operations Plan (FOP); the FOP's outlined where DELWP carry out fire management activities on Victoria's public land to help reduce the impacts of bushfires to communities and the environment. Council has a close working relationship with local DELWP staff involved in this and we have been able to input into the FOP in response to community safety concerns. (DELWP staff attended a Council meeting to discuss the fire risk between Mooroopna and Shepparton and how the FOP was used to manage the risk). A copy of the current FOP is attached as Attachment 1 for background knowledge.
- I am not aware of any reason for Council to have an adverse view on the hectare-based target approach. This comment is said in consideration of the low fire risk within the municipality in comparison to other municipalities.
- From July 2016 the Victorian government's fuel management program on public land will be driven by a risk reduction target and transition away from a hectare-based target. Council agrees with this as it is addressing specific community risks rather than achieving a percentage based target. The *Safer Together* approach to reducing bushfire risk will ensure DELWP's fire management actions will be locally appropriate with the intention of reducing the impacts of fire making communities safer. Fire agencies will work in partnership with each other and with local communities so that fire science and expertise is combined with in-depth local knowledge. Councils will be expected to be part of the partnership in the *Safer Together* approach.
- In terms of what are the fire risks within the municipality, I would respectfully suggest the bigger fire risk within the municipality is from fire on privately owned land and relate to agricultural practices and permits issued under the CFA Act (Schedule 13 Permits). On face value this is outside the scope of the inquiry.