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Media Release

Trial of planned burns notifications in the Dandenongs and Silvan

The Department of Sustainability and Environment is seeking to email Dandenongs businesses and residents directly when a planned burn is likely to be held in Dandenong Ranges National Park and the Silvan water catchment.

DSE is collecting email addresses to expand existing notifications methods, such as doorknocking, letter box drops, signs, media releases and information on www.dse.vic.gov.au/fires

Residents and business operators are also being asked to supply their mobile phone numbers so that this method of communication can be trialled as well.

DSE Eastern Metropolitan Fire Manager Anthony Maxwell said the trial was in response to a greater level of anxiety in the community following the February bushfires.

“We understand that communities are going to be more anxious when they see smoke, so we want to keep them as informed as possible,” Mr Maxwell said.

The trial will initially focus on email addresses, but as more people register DSE hopes to send text messages to local residents and businesses as well.

Mr Maxwell said the email alerts would usually be sent the day before a burn.

“Planned burning is highly weather dependent so there will often be decisions to proceed, or not, just hours before. In these cases, emails will be sent as soon as the decision has been made.”

Mr Maxwell emphasised the email notifications were not intended to replace other information channels, such as the Victorian Bushfire Information Line or Country Fire Authority messages.

“This is simply another method to try and reach as many people as possible to advise them of the likelihood of smoke and any road closures affecting their area,” Mr Maxwell said.

“We hope advance warning of planned burns can help prevent major inconvenience or concerns.”

To receive emails from DSE on burns being conducted in the Dandenong Ranges and Silvan areas, please send an email to burns.info@dse.vic.gov.au, including your name, email address, a relevant suburb and mobile number if you wish. People can also nominate a work or business email address.

There are 12 burns planned for this Dandenongs in autumn this year. All are subject to favourable weather conditions.

DSE plans burns with local communities through its Fire Operations Plans, which are reviewed each year. The plans are on the DSE web site and comment is invited year-round.

Anyone who is concerned that smoke may be a bushfire or for further information on fires or planned burns, please call the **Victorian Bushfire Information Line on 1800 240 667 (free call)** or the TTY on 1800 122 969.