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MEDIA RELEASE

RESEARCH RESULTS 'DISTURBING' – CFA VOLUNTEERS

The CFA volunteers' association is drawing attention to some disturbing research results about how people react to bushfire warnings.

Volunteer Fire Brigades Victoria (VFBV) says CFA volunteers are very concerned at the discovery that nearly one third of people who hear a bushfire warning will decide to 'wait and see' before taking any action.

The volunteers say that when you receive a warning over local radio, the internet or on the mobile phone, that's the time to stop waiting and put your bushfire safety plan into action.

The research was conducted by Latrobe University academics for the Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre. They interviewed people in areas of high bushfire risk and found that those who chose to 'wait and see' did so because they were concerned they would make the wrong decision, either facing the danger of a bushfire, or leaving when it wasn't necessary.

CFA volunteers are urging every Victorian to be alert on hot days and have a plan so that every member of the family knows what to do.

CFA Volunteer Captain Bruce Jewell says fire safety starts with you, and deciding to 'wait and see' means you are neither preparing to defend nor taking the opportunity to leave early.

"What seems to happen is that people wait until they can see fire... and if you can see fire, it's too late," Capt Jewell said.

"What you need to do is to make your plan, and you need to leave early," he said.

"So if you know the conditions tomorrow are going to be extreme, severe or catastrophic – whatever your trigger might be – you leave early, don't wait for the fire to be on your doorstep."

Ends...

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