

# Bairnsdale Advertiser

OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER - 138th YEAR OF P

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## Fire warning review likely

**An Australia wide review of bushfire warnings is on the cards.**

In January this year, bushfire campaigner, Belinda Clarkson, wrote to the Prime Minister, copied to all state premiers and territory leaders, saying existing extreme bushfire warnings "...underestimated the rate of passage of fire by more than 50 per cent..."

The Australian New Zealand Emergency Management Committee has since agreed to lead a review of bushfire warnings.

On the June 16, the Tasmanian Premier Will Hodgman wrote to Ms Clarkson, saying the "Tasmanian Government is working with the Australian Government and the states and territories to ensure improved consistency of warnings and information relating to bushfires".

"The Council of Australian Governments' Law Crime and Community Safety Council has acknowledged that the science that underpins current fire danger ratings system can be improved," Mr Hodgman said.

The rate at which a bushfire will spread is estimated using models that take into account a range of factors including fuel type, fuel load, wind speed, temperature, relative humidity slope and moisture.

These models are used to assess the level of risk and estimate the time that a fire will impact a community in its path. Accurately estimating the rate at which a bushfire will spread is important to ensure that timely warnings can be issued.

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## Changes afoot

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"The LCCSC has endorsed the development of a new 'next generation' fire danger rating system as a project of national significance. The Bushfire and Natural Hazards Cooperative Research Centre is leading this project on behalf of the LCCSC and fire agencies," Mr Hodgman said.

"The new fire danger rating system will impact on the way that warnings and information are is-

sued to communities.

"In April 2015 the Australia New Zealand Emergency Management Committee accepted a 'National Review of Warnings and Information' and has agreed to lead a review of current frameworks, assessing the evidence of change, and identifying opportunities for harmonisation."

"The *Bairnsdale Advertiser's* coverage of this issue was critical in achieving this good news," Ms Clarkson said.