Media Release

18 June 2018 | Media contact: Brittany Evans 0447 389 726

Illegal dumping threatens community safety

Forest Fire Management Victoria (FFMVic) has identified an increase in the illegal dumping of potentially hazardous commercial waste and household rubbish as a major concern for public land across the north east region.

In the past few months forest officers have responded to more than 20 reports of illegal rubbish dumping in our parks and forests.

Alarmingly, a number of the incidents involved the dumping of asbestos and other potentially dangerous waste that appears to be associated with commercial businesses.

Hume's Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Aaron Kennedy said: "People who dump rubbish in our forests have no regard for the health and safety of others or the environment.

"These actions are putting the community at risk, which is unacceptable.

"Illegal dumpers are becoming more and more cunning, and the volumes of waste they are dumping is increasing.

"Recently, almost 200 used fire extinguishers were found dumped near the Chiltern-Mt Pilot National Park.

"We were also forced to temporarily close a popular roadside rest stop in Edi, after a large amount of asbestos sheeting was found down a disused well."

Mr Kennedy said the cost of removing rubbish and waste from forest areas was in the tens of thousands of dollars across the region each year.

"This money should be spent on other things the community requires like improving access tracks and recreational facilities," Mr Kennedy said.

The dumping of household or industrial waste on a site that is not licensed to accept it is an offence under the *Environment Protection Act 1970* and can attract a fine of up to $6,342 if the case goes to court.

On the spot fines apply for littering, starting at $317.

If you see waste dumped in the bush or abandoned on private land, report it to EPA by calling 1300 EPA VIC (1300 372 842).

To report environmental crime on public land contact DELWP on 136 186 or to Crimestoppers on 1800 333 000.

Environment, Land, Water and Planning | Melbourne Water | Parks VICTORIA — Healthy Parks Healthy People® | VicForests