



18th August, 2009

Government 2.0 Taskforce Secretariat

SUBMISSION – LOCALISING INFORMATION EXCHANGE – COMMUNITY WEBSITES CURRENTLY ABLE TO DO THIS

.au Community Domains is a not for profit subsidiary of the .au Domain Name Administrators and has, for the last couple of years, implemented a system of Community Geographic Domain Names (CGDNs) which is a world first initiative giving communities, from the very smallest, their own geographic home on the internet, such as www.kyogle.nsw.au, www.talgarno.vic.au. CGDN websites is providing a communication forum for local issues, news and events to residents of their town itself and is also a means of promoting all aspects of the town to visitors to their locality.

These websites are community managed and driven and have stimulated and facilitated community-generated content as well as producing some wonderful outcomes and initiatives including:

- Community Fire Plan and Emergency information
- Council Involvement
- Car pooling
- Reuniting of long lost friends
- Driving for a community bank
- Helping relocate to the community
- Rosters for community groups
- Promoting local economy
- Youth engagement

During the fire disaster affecting the Gippsland Region of Victoria in January 2009, coordinators of the Mirboo North community website ensured community members were kept well informed. On the homepage of the site they included emergency numbers for the CFA and fire and ambulance authorities as well as details for local radio stations and information on the Gippsland Emergency Relief Fund.

Outcome:

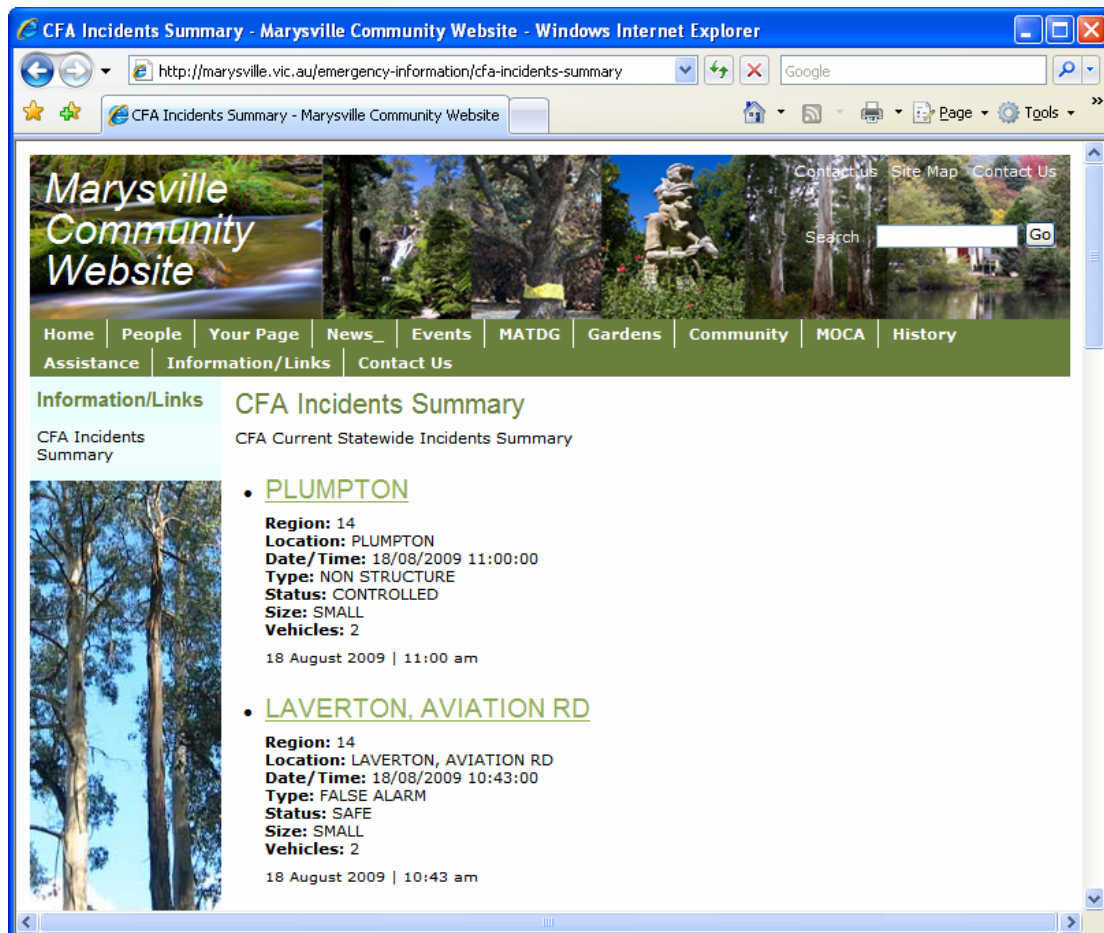
During the week of the fires, hits to the local website **increased seven fold**. This explosion of web visits shows how important the Mirboo North website is as a local source of news and information.

After the “Black Saturday” bushfires in Victoria we also temporarily registered 28 geographic domain names and created community websites, such as www.marysville.vic.au for use by communities that have been affected by the Victorian bushfires to assist them in their rebuilding which have been much utilised.



auCD has also developed an automated self-managed community website Content Management System “Community Site in a Box” and has been providing free licensing of this (which includes hosting) to CGDN approved community groups until the 30th June, 2010. This system requires no technical expertise and has proven very easy to use for community groups. One of the features of this CMS is an RSS feed widget. This enables communities to have information that is relevant to them be fed automatically into their community websites. For example, local weather and Country Fire Authority (CFA) Victorian state-wide incidents can be automatically fed to their local community websites. (Please see screen shots below as examples).

We would recommend that government provide, where possible, localised content syndication of relevant information to enable community members to access this information via their preferred communication channels.





A screenshot of a Windows Internet Explorer browser window. The address bar shows the URL 'http://callignee.vic.au/emergency-information/weather'. The page content includes a navigation menu with items like 'Home', 'News & Updates', 'Events', 'Contacts', 'Share information/Links', 'Your Story', and 'In Our Community'. A sidebar on the left lists 'Emergency Information' with sub-items 'CFA Incidents', 'Summary', and 'Weather'. The main content area is titled 'Weather' and lists current conditions for Callignee at 11:00am EST: Temperature 13.2°C, Feels like 11.0°C, Dew point 6.3°C, Relative humidity 63%, Wind W at 26 km/h, gusting to 37 km/h, Rain 0.0mm since 9am, and Pressure 1026.6 hPa. Below this is a 'Latrobe Valley weather forecast' for Tuesday (Mostly sunny, 5°C - 18°C) and Wednesday (Sunny, 6°C - 20°C). On the right, there is a 'Login to Webmail' section with input fields for 'Email Address:' and 'Password:', a 'Login' button, and a link to 'Apply for an email address'.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Leonie Dunbar'.

Leonie Dunbar
General Manager