

# Bunker reaches first base

## Somerville man's brainchild wins accreditation

Business | Andrea Kellett

A SOMERVILLE manufacturer has struck gold, developing the first bushfire shelter to be accredited for private use in Victoria.

Wildfire Safety Bunkers launched its shelter last Thursday, declaring it would revolutionise safety for families caught in a severe bushfire.

The concrete structure accommodates six adults with enough oxygen for one hour.

Deputy Building Commissioner Sarah McCann-Bartlett said the bunker had undergone three months of rigorous testing by a panel of experts.

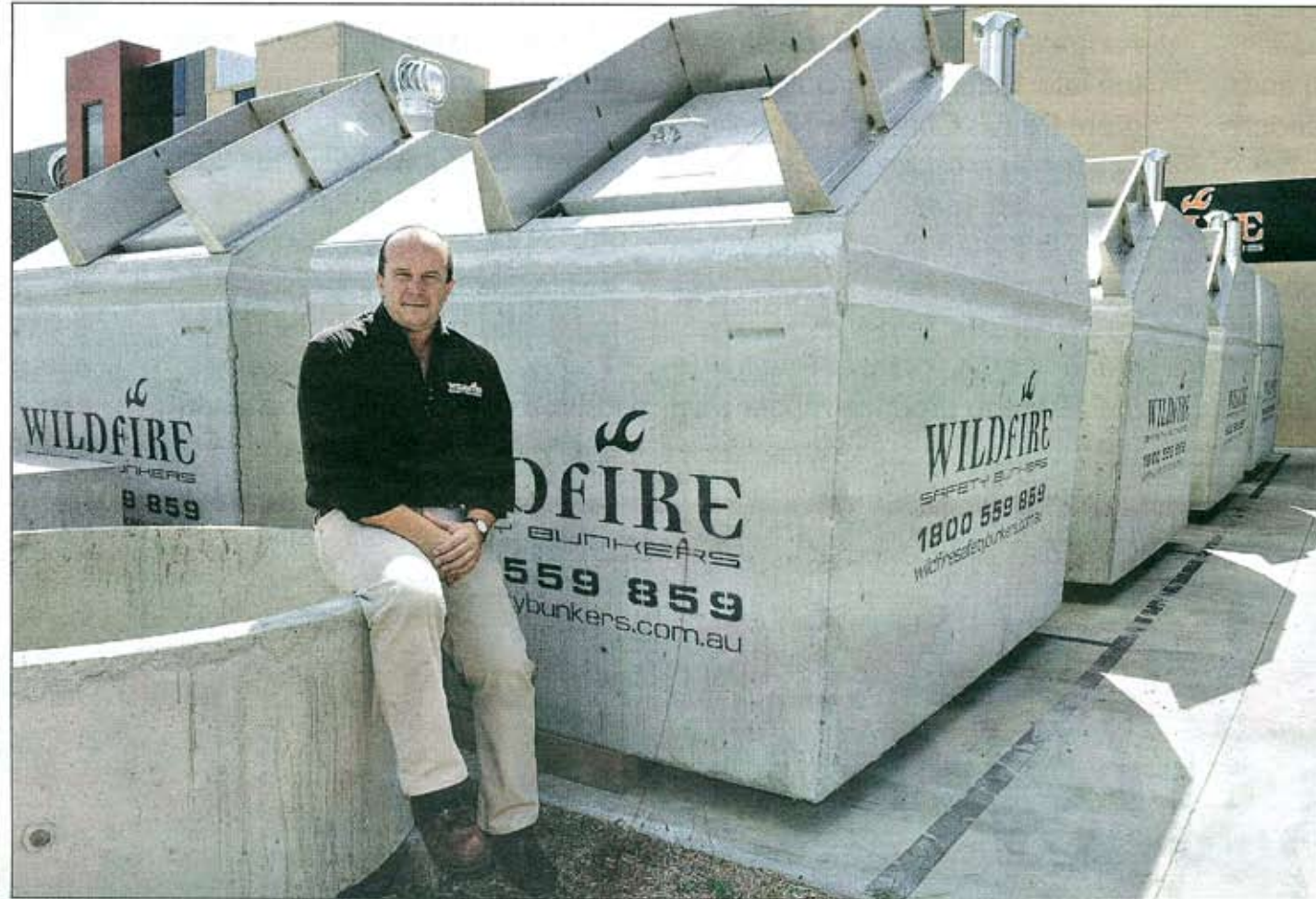
The commission has accredited the Somerville bunker while the Federal Government develops national standards for private bushfire shelters.

Ms McCann-Bartlett said "rogue" operators who were manufacturing "substandard products" had become a problem since the Black Saturday fires.

"This shelter has been designed to withstand all bushfire conditions, including flame contact," she said.

Wildfire Safety Bunkers director Anthony Tratt, of Mt Martha, said his bunker had withstood temperatures of 1060C.

His company has invested more



Wildfire Safety Bunkers director David French with the accredited bushfire shelters.

Picture: JILL MITCHELL. N38ML455

than \$1 million researching and developing the bunker over the past three years.

"My opinion is that if a lot of people had these on Black Saturday there would have been a lot of lives saved," he said.

"This will be a relief to the hundreds of property owners who have been waiting for a government building standard to be set for fire bunkers."

He and Ms McCann-Bartlett stressed the bunkers were a place of

last resort when bushfire plans failed.

"It's somewhere to go when there's nowhere to go," Mr Tratt said.

The shelters retail for \$10,500 each plus installation costs. Details: [wildfiresafetybunkers.com.au](http://wildfiresafetybunkers.com.au)