

Bunkers to give added protection in bushfires

Fire ready | Lisa Habermann

IT WAS the devastating loss of life on Black Saturday that prompted Mornington's Anthony Tratt to see the benefits of bunkers in bushfire-prone areas.

Mr Tratt decided to improve on the bunker design used in cyclone and tornado regions and build bunkers for Australian bushfire conditions.

Since opening his business, Wildfire Safety Bunkers, 14 weeks ago, he has received "hundreds of inquiries".

Mr Tratt stresses that the bunkers are not designed to be used in place of a comprehensive fire plan.

"A bushfire bunker offers an alternative when residents find themselves in a situation that could be life threatening and where urgent shelter is required," Mr Tratt said.

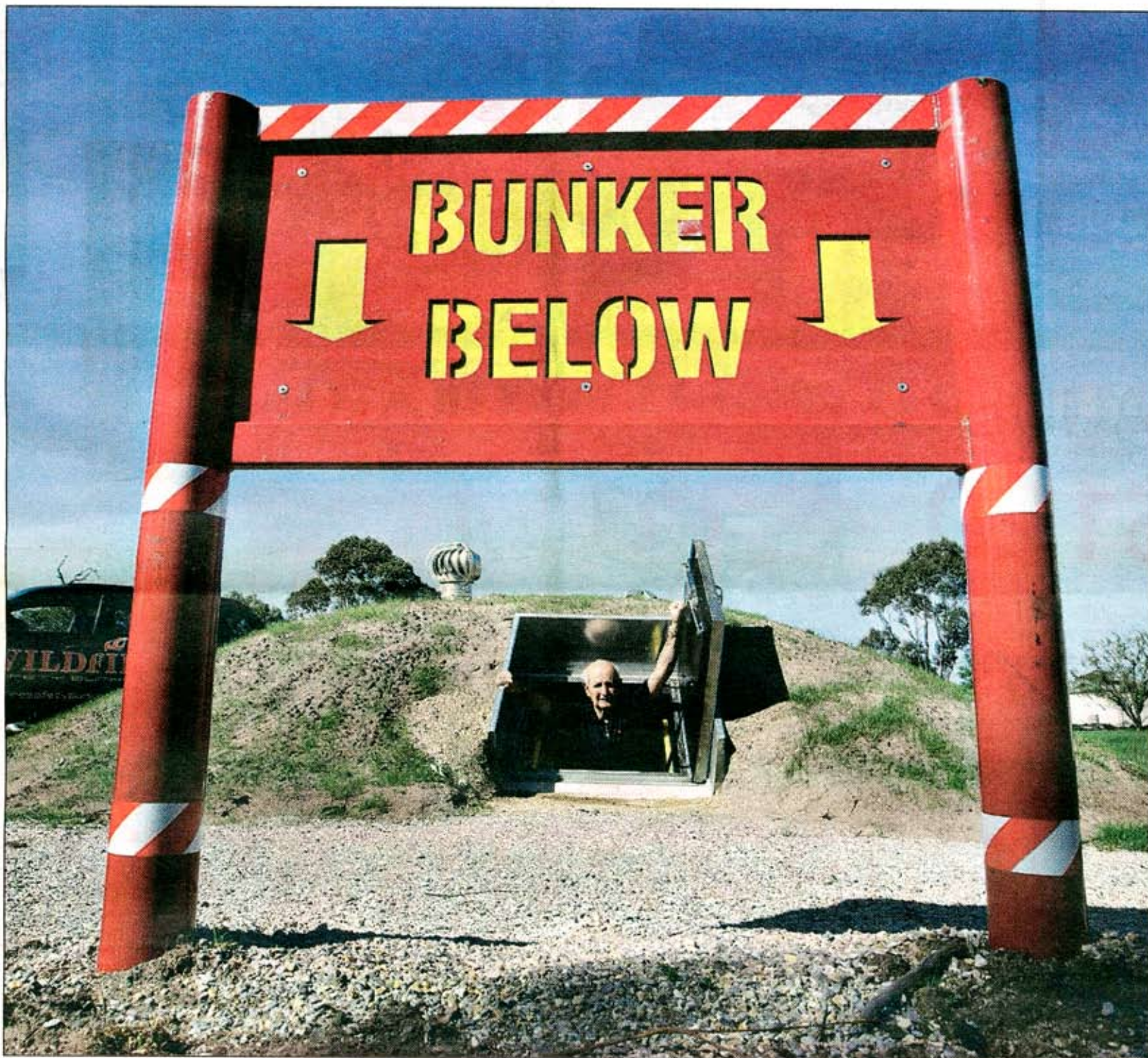
Mr Tratt originally imported bunkers from the US but has now started to manufacture his own designs at Hastings. He hopes to employ about six workers.

Mr Tratt uses his elderly friend Russell Corrigan, from Mornington, in his promotion videos to show how easy it is to get in and out of the bunkers.

"Russell is an old World War II Digger who has worked in bomb shelters," Mr Tratt said.

Mr Tratt said he was surprised by the lack of fire planning by Mornington Peninsula residents. "I don't know if it's because people live by the beach and think they will just go there," he said.

"But I wouldn't like to be around at the height of summer when there are half a million people on the peninsula all heading for the beach at the same time."



Russ Corrigan helps demonstrate a new wildfire bunker.