

# Fire bunker gets sale go-ahead

## Shelter an 'option of last resort'

By Jo Winterbottom

A FIRE bunker built in Somerville is the first to be accredited for sale to the public.

Wildfire Safety Bunkers in Simcock Street last week launched the bunker after receiving accreditation from the state Building Commission.

Although the bunker was tested to withstand the most severe bushfire conditions, Wildfire director Anthony Tratt stressed it was an option of last resort.

"It is not designed as a substitute for sound fire practice or to offer residents additional incentive to remain under threat of fire, but essentially to assist if a threatening situation develops," he said.

"It is somewhere to go when there is nowhere to go."

Mr Tratt said the company had received hundreds of inquiries and had been waiting for accreditation to begin installing the bunkers in properties throughout Victoria.

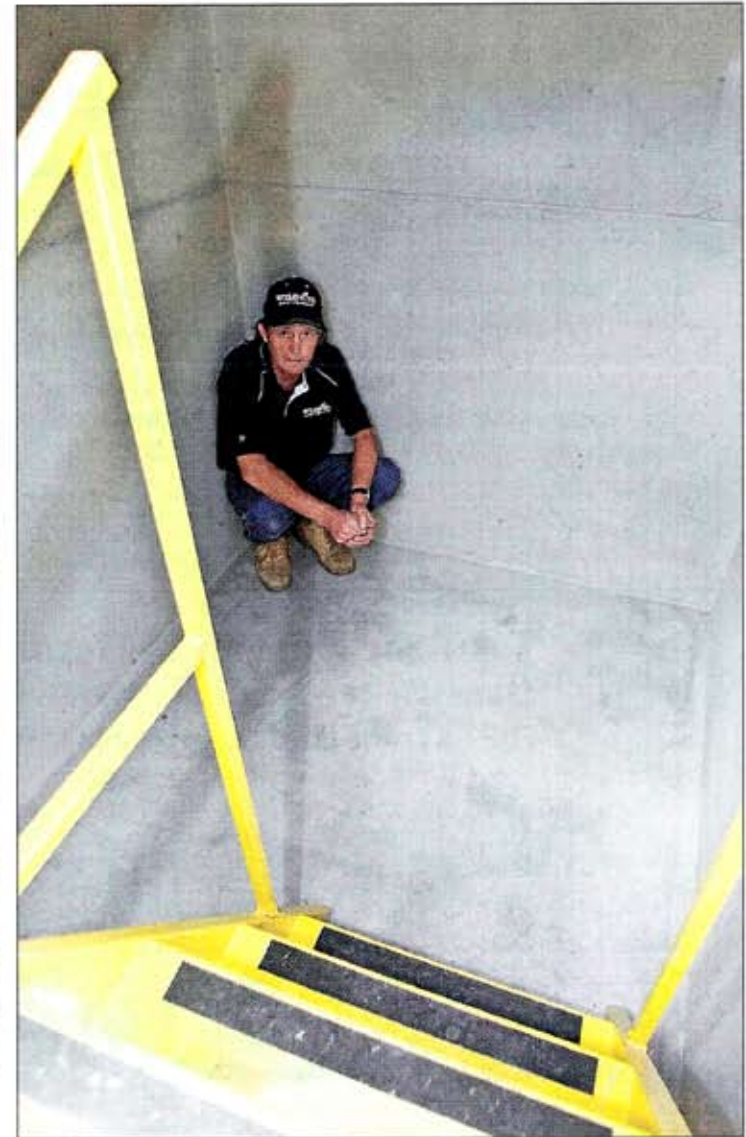
He said it was the first safety bunker of its type in the world to gain government approval and the company would explore export opportunities.

The Wildfire bunker was adapted from a product used in the United States for sheltering from cyclones, hurricanes and tornadoes.

More than 40,000 of the US models had been installed in the past 30 years



**Strong interest:** Above, Anthony Tratt explains his bunker to reporters at the launch of the Wildfire Safety Bunker. Right, His brother Jarrod Tratt inside the bunker.



**Picture:** Gary Sissons

and no fatalities had been recorded during their use in emergency situations.

There are two Wildfire bunkers available — one for people and animals, and a simpler, non-ventilated version for valuables.

The standard bunker catering for six people is priced at \$10,500 plus the cost of installation, which varies depending on the ground to be excavated. Constructed from reinforced 10-centimetre thick concrete, the bunker comes in two

pieces that are dropped into a hole then covered with dirt.

It has sealable air vents and a heavy-duty door with an observation window. Optional extras include a pop-up sprinkler, water tank and air chamber tank.

When fully sealed, the bunker has enough air for six people to shelter for one hour. It is designed to be installed in clear ground, away from buildings and trees that could fall and obstruct the door.