

An Open Letter to the Premier on fuel reduction burning

Dear Premier

The Victorian Lands Alliance is a recently formed coalition of groups utilising public land that seek to progress discussion and policy on the sustainable, multiple use and management of public land in Victoria.

We write to seek your support for the parliamentary Environment and Natural Resources Committee (ENRC) recommendations. We believe that only through appropriate forest and native vegetation management, utilising such management tools as selective grazing, can we truly leave our public lands in a better state for future generations to enjoy.

In particular, can I draw your attention to the ENRC recommendation that focused on increasing the level of prescribed burning to an annual figure of 385,000 hectares as this can be undertaken with immediate effect ahead of the summer 2009/10 bushfire season.

We note the belated, vigorous discussion in the public arena on the need for increased levels of prescribed burning and further note that many environment groups state this has always been their policy.

Given this widespread public support for a reduction of combustible fuel to lessen the impact of inevitable future bushfires on the environment and the safety of the public, we call upon your government to publicly support and implement, without equivocation, this parliamentary inquiry recommendation. We also call for this support now, knowing the Teague Royal Commission will examine, but may not report on this issue until later in 2010.

Rural communities, bush users and emergency services workers have an expectation that government will act decisively on increased levels of prescribed burning, as recommended by the inquiry, for the autumn 2009 burning program.

Your government would enjoy the strong support of the community to an early commitment that would give comfort to people living in and near forest areas.

Victorian Lands Alliance