

July 8<sup>th</sup> 2009



# **VICTORIAN LANDS ALLIANCE**

## **Media Release**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

#### **GOVT MUST BE ALLOWED TO ACT ON BUSHFIRES**

Criticism of the Victorian Government for acting to protect communities before next fire season is unproductive says a group advocating for better fire management on public land.

“We have been pressing the government to get on with the job of implementing fire protection measures recommended by the parliamentary bushfire inquiry last year” said Max Rheese, secretary of the Victorian Lands Alliance.

The government had received criticism from the Bushfire Royal Commission and some academics for acting prior to the delivery of the Commission interim report.

“Five months has elapsed since the firestorm of February 7, we are less than five months away from the next bushfire season and we have the same policies and procedures as last summer”.

“It is high time decisive action was taken to minimise losses and protect lives. Let the government take measures to protect communities without interference. Our only concern is that the government will be too timid in adopting sufficient measures to protect the community from a repeat of the devastation of earlier this year”.

Six No Fuel No Fire community meetings calling for action by the government have been held in the last three months by the Alliance, with three more scheduled for the next four weeks at Pakenham, Traralgon and Cann River.

“Each of our No Fuel No Fire meetings has produced motions from the community calling on the Premier to adopt the recommendations of his own bushfire inquiry to treble fuel reduction burns to 385,000 hectares per year. We must support the government and the land managers in implementing all of the inquiry recommendations”.

“Waiting another five weeks, which is potentially putting lives at risk next summer, cannot be justified” concluded Mr Rheese.

Link to Parliamentary Bushfire Inquiry Report:

[http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/enrc/inquiries/bushfires/Report/Bushfires\\_June\\_08.pdf](http://www.parliament.vic.gov.au/enrc/inquiries/bushfires/Report/Bushfires_June_08.pdf)

Link to VLA Review of the government response to the Bushfire Inquiry:

<http://www.landsalliance.org/download/30>

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[www.landsalliance.org](http://www.landsalliance.org)

The Victorian Lands Alliance is a coalition of member based recreational and commercial users of public land representing over 40,000 Victorians. The primary objective of the Alliance is to initiate public policy which is consistent with the ideals of its member organisations to improve the management of public land.

This policy will ensure active management and sustainable multiple-use of public land that balances the needs of the environment and the community.