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## **VICTORIAN LANDS ALLIANCE**

### **Media Release**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

## **New report backs fuel reduction action**

A new report released today by the Victorian Lands Alliance strongly supports the case for increased fuel reduction burning to help control bushfires.

The highly referenced report draws on research and 27 case studies of the Department of Sustainability and Environment, CSIRO and the W.A Department of Conservation and Land Management, to show that reducing forest fuel will help control bushfires, thereby minimising risk to communities.

Releasing the report today, VLA secretary Max Rheese said “This report challenges the misconception there is little research that demonstrates prescribed fuel reduction burning is an effective bushfire management tool. The report provides compelling evidence that fuel reduction burning is critically important in containing bushfires.”

“Many people in the community are unaware of the extensive research supporting more low intensity cool burning to help protect the environment and communities. This report shows flora and fauna recover quickly from low intensity burning compared with extensive damage suffered from inevitable, uncontrollable bushfires” said Mr Rheese.

While the report deals solely with the issue of prescribed burning, the VLA is also urging government to consider controlled grazing, thinning operations and timber harvesting as additional tools to help public land managers in mitigating bushfires.

Every inquiry into bushfires since the 1939 Stretton royal commission has found inadequate forest fuel reduction had contributed to fire disasters. The Brumby government’s own 2008 parliamentary inquiry into bushfires recommended prescribed burning be increased from the current target of 130,000 hectares to 385,000 hectares per year, but this has ‘in-principle support’ only from the government.

“In three separate years between 1974 and 1984 forest managers achieved prescribed burn targets of 345,000, 370,000 and 477,000 hectares, so there is no logistical reason we cannot resume this level of protection for our environment” concluded Mr Rheese.

The report has been submitted to the Bushfires royal commission ahead of their February 15<sup>th</sup> hearings on fuel reduction issues.

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[Effectiveness of fuel reduction burning on mitigating bushfires](#)

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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.