



KEY STEPS IN MINIMISING BUSHFIRE RISK AND POOR ENVIRONMENTAL OUTCOMES FROM FIRE IN VICTORIA

The Commission views protection of human life and the safety of communities as the highest priority for bushfire policy. Royal Commission report July 31st 2010

- The concept of primacy of fire management as the cornerstone for effective public land management in Victoria must be embraced and explicitly stated as the No.1 priority of the Department of Sustainability and Environment. Failure in fire management is likely to undermine the integrity of most other departmental management initiatives i.e. flora and fauna, parks, water and timber.
- The government adopts the royal commission recommendation on prescribed burning, implementing a target of a minimum 5% of public land as part of a programmatic approach with long-term commitment from government. The prescribed burning program needs to achieve long-term risk minimisation for public safety and biodiversity benefits to be realised.
- Recognising the primary operational constraint in meeting prescribed burning targets is a lack of financial and personnel resources, the government commits additional full-time fire personnel to implement the program approach to fire management.
- Recognition of the primacy of the fire management program in allocating resources and the 22 to 1 return on investment in fire preparation activities.
- Monitoring the benefits and impacts of prescribed burning and unplanned fire through research is essential and must be incorporated in the fire management program.

- In recognising not all vegetation or forest classes are suitable for prescribed burning; other methods of forest management such as controlled cattle grazing and timber harvesting need to be supported to provide management in these vegetation classes.
- Local knowledge, expertise and input must be more effectively incorporated in fire prevention and planning through a state-wide non-government Community Fire Forum.
- An independent annual review of the performance of the fire management program to be tabled in parliament by August 31st each year. This review to be informed by open transparent records of expenditure by each agency involved.