

August 1st 2010



VICTORIAN LANDS ALLIANCE

Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

GOVT MUST MAKE FIRE MANAGEMENT No.1 PRIORITY

The government must recognise the royal commission emphasis on the “protection of human life and the safety of communities as the highest priority for bushfire policy” in taking action on their recommendations said the Victorian Lands Alliance.

“We call on the government to lay the foundation for future bushfire policy by declaring that the No.1 priority for the Department of Sustainability and Environment is fire management” said the secretary of the Victorian Lands Alliance, Max Rheese.

“Giving clarity to those who manage fires on public land and adopting the recommendation to implement prescribed burning on a minimum of five per cent of public land will minimise bushfire risk to the community.”

“It is clear from the royal commission there has been a “lack of organisational focus” and that “governments have previously shown reluctance to implement ...increased fuel reduction targets” despite the recommendations of many past inquiries and the government’s own 2008 parliamentary inquiry.”

The expert panel appointed by the commission to look at fuel reduction were clear in their advice on the level of prescribed burning needed, which was accepted by the Commissioners, and their advice to begin action without delay.

All major stakeholders, including environment groups, have accepted the commission recommendation on increased prescribed burning.

Years of confusion over priorities and the need for “resolution of competing objectives” has seen “a minimalist approach to prescribed burning” that has left the state unprepared to deal with substantial bushfire threat said the commissioners.

“The government must commit significant numbers of extra full time fire-fighters and financial resources to a long-term prescribed burning program to avoid repetition of the \$4 billion cost to Victoria from the Black Saturday fires” said Mr Rheese.

– ENDS –

Key points for the government to adopt in a return to responsible public land management:
[Key Steps in Minimising Bushfire Risk](#)

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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.

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