

Queensland Government Response to the 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission

December 2010

A summary

The 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission (the Commission) made 67 recommendations in its final report to improve Victoria's ability to respond to bushfires, following the devastating Black Saturday fires in February 2009 that claimed the lives of 173 people.

The Queensland Government has carefully examined the Commission's final report to see which recommendations could help improve our capacity to respond to major bushfires. Queensland supports the overwhelming majority of the recommendations relevant to our State, and in many cases we already have arrangements in place that reflect the intent of the recommendations. It is important to note that not all of the recommendations carry the same weight or relevance in Queensland because our natural hazard risk profile, organisational structure and command and control arrangements are different to Victoria and do not require the same amount or level of change.

Queensland's natural hazards

Queensland's most prevalent natural disasters, listed by risk level are storms, cyclones, floods and then bushfires. The risk of Queensland experiencing bushfires as severe and intense as Black Saturday is low. The summers in most of our regions are typically wet, unlike the southern states which have hot dry summers where increasing temperatures contribute to dangerous fire conditions.

Although Queensland has hundreds of bushfires of various sizes every year, only some are serious enough to cause loss of life or damage to property and pose much less threat to life and property than our storms, cyclones and floods.

Disaster Management

Queensland is well versed in disaster management. Given our predominant risks, we have long had an all hazards approach to incident management and emphasise that implementation of the Commission's recommendations must continue to focus on our most prevalent risk factors.

Our all hazards approach to emergency management enables the use of resources from local, state and federal governments as well as non-government agencies such as the Red Cross and Salvation Army, working together to respond to and recover from, emergency situations in Queensland

The Queensland Government recently introduced changes to the *Disaster Management Act 2003* to allow the declaration of a disaster when one is likely to happen, rather than after the disaster has happened. This will enable, for example, State-assisted resources to be deployed to an area before an impending event actually occurs, when in the past disaster declarations could only occur once an event had

happened. This will provide a better level of protection and emergency response for Queenslanders facing an impending disaster.

Our process for incident management allows our emergency services to scale up an emergency response from the point of incident at the local level right up to the State level. This allows us to draw on local knowledge as well as a coordinated State wide response, utilising the resources of local and State governments, and where necessary, the Commonwealth Government. Queensland legislation clearly defines the roles and responsibilities of the Minister, local authorities, State government agencies and individual public officers, including volunteers, during disaster events.

Response to Bushfires

In Queensland, all fire events are successfully managed through the framework of the Australasian Inter-Service Incident Management Systems (AIIIMS). This allows for a seamless integration of activities and resources of multiple agencies and utilises the principles of command, control and coordination. Within the incident management framework we have added the functions of intelligence investigation and public information, which includes establishing contact with the media and the appointment of a Media Officer if required, to make sure that the public is kept informed about incidents.

In Queensland we have one fire service that responds to bushfires and structural fires. We have one Fire Commissioner, and a well defined and understood chain of command. The Fire Commissioner has legislative authority for all aspects of fire management and operations.

Bushfire Safety Policy

We have a robust bushfire safety policy and have implemented significant initiatives that will lead to better safety for Queenslanders. These include:

- An all hazards approach promoting cooperation across all levels of government and partnerships with non-government organisations;
- Nationally consistent warning templates and a graded scale of alerts and information to the community;
- Agreements and protocols with ABC and Commercial Radio Australia for emergency broadcasts and the use of the Standard Emergency Warning Signal to precede broadcast warnings;
- The use of Emergency Alert, a telephone warning system which sends messages to land lines and mobile phones based on billing addresses. Technical studies are currently underway to extend the warning system to mobile phones based on their location;

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- Robust evacuation arrangements, supported by legislation;
- A nationally consistent six category fire severity rating scale, including the proposed introduction in 2011 of a grass fire danger rating tool which is suitable to Queensland's predominant vegetation type;
- Improved staffing arrangements at fire communication centres during predicted high fire activity days;
- The ability to ban the lighting of fires during peak fire activity periods;
- The Prepare.Act.Survive community education campaign which emphasises that the preservation of life is the number one priority during a fire and teaches people to make their personal bushfire plans;
- A team of Queensland Fire and Rescue Service staff and a significant number of trained volunteers delivering the Prepare.Act.Survive messages at the community level;
- The designation of some 60 Neighbourhood Safer Places in local communities as places for people to gather as a last resort in the event that their homes no longer offer shelter during a fire;
- A community based arson prevention program;
- A long-term program for fuel reduction burning in national parks, conservation parks, resources reserves, forest reserves and unallocated State land; and
- A property based urban fire levy system with discounts for pensioners.

Options for shelter have been strengthened through a combination of Evacuation Centres outside of the impacted area (as a first resort) and Neighbourhood Safer Places (as a last resort). Queensland will adopt a new national construction standard for private bushfire bunkers in 2011. We believe that this is a safer framework for the community than the use of Community Fire Refuges which may be in the path of an approaching fire and may not have the ability to accommodate or protect all those who may seek shelter there.

Reviews and Inquiries

We acknowledge that there is always room for improvement and we draw on the experiences of others, such as the events of Black Saturday and the Commission's findings.

The Public Accounts and Public Works Parliamentary Committee is expected to conclude their inquiry into rural fire management in Queensland next year, including the funding structure for fire response in rural areas. The recommendations of the Committee will be carefully considered to see how we can further improve rural fire management in Queensland.

A review of the land use planning policy: SPP1/03: *Mitigating the Adverse Impacts of Flood, Bushfire and Landslide* is currently underway.

Evacuation management arrangements for vulnerable people are also being reviewed as a result of the Commission's recommendations to further ensure the safety of those in our community that require special assistance during an emergency.

Actions for Long Term Results

The recommendations about electricity-caused fires and changes to building codes in bushfire prone areas are complex, and we are examining them closely. We are also participating in national discussions with other states and territories and the Commonwealth to address those recommendations that require a national approach, such as the review of the Building Codes, national education and research programs and the use of Commonwealth resources during major disaster events.

Recommendations not supported

There are a limited number of recommendations that are not supported for implementation in Queensland and they are:

- The designation of community fire refuges – Queensland has robust evacuation arrangements in place through a combination of Evacuation Centres outside of the impacted area as a first resort and Neighbourhood Safer Places as a last resort;
- Identification cards for volunteers (volunteers wear personal protective equipment when deployed and are easily identifiable and known to those in the area, eliminating the need for an ID card);
- The retreat and resettlement of communities in high bushfire risk areas – Queensland's bushfire risk profile does not warrant resettlement as a way of mitigating the risk. This recommendation is also not supported by New South Wales, Tasmania and South Australia; and
- The removal of deemed-to-satisfy provisions of certain building standards for construction in the flame zone – Queensland does not support the removal of these provisions on the basis that this would unreasonably increase the cost of building in fire-affected communities while not considered to greatly increase safety of fire-prone communities.

Attachment 1
Response to recommendations

QUEENSLAND GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 2009 VICTORIAN BUSHFIRE ROYAL COMMISSION FINAL REPORT

Lead Agencies	
Department of Community Safety	DCS
Department of Communities	DoC
Department of Education and Training	DET
Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation	DEEDI
Department of the Environment and Resource Management	DERM
Department of Infrastructure and Planning	DIP
Department of Premier and Cabinet	DPC
Department of Transport and Main Roads	TMR
Queensland Police Service	QPS

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	CHAPTER 1 – BUSHFIRE SAFETY POLICY		
1	<p>The State Revise its bushfire safety policy. While adopting the national Prepare.Survive.Act framework in Victoria, the policy should do the following:</p> <p>a. Enhance the role of warnings—including providing for timely and informative advice about the predicted passage of a fire and the actions to be taken by people in areas potentially in its path.</p> <p>b. Emphasise that all fires are different in ways that require an awareness of fire conditions, local circumstances and personal capacity</p> <p>c. Recognise that the heightened risk on the worst days demands a different response</p> <p>d. Retain those elements of the existing bushfire policy that have proved effective</p> <p>e. Strengthen the range of options available in the face of fire, including community refuges*, bushfire shelters and evacuation</p> <p>f. Ensure that local solutions are tailored and known to communities through local bushfire planning</p> <p>g. Improve advice on the nature of fire and house defendability, taking account of broader landscape risks</p>	Supported*	<p>Queensland is well-placed in terms of its bushfire safety policy. In response to the Royal Commission’s Interim Report No.1, the Government has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Adopted the new national Fire Danger Rating system; the <i>National Framework for Scaled Advice and Warnings to the community</i>; and most recently the changes to how FDRs are determined ● Implementation of Emergency Alert early warning system to landlines and mobiles based on billing addresses ● Enhanced warning protocols and revised procedures for delivering information to the community during an emergency incident including the use of media releases and Emergency Alert messages ● Memoranda Of Understanding with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation and Commercial Radio Australia for emergency warnings and the use of the Standard Emergency Warning signal ● The launch of <i>Are you Bushfire Prepared? Prepare.Act.Survive</i> and associated media campaign ● The establishment of over 60 Neighbourhood Safer Places (NSP) across the State ● The use of the Queensland Fire and Rescue Service (QFRS) Mitigation and Education Officers to facilitate and educate staff and volunteers in the Prepare.Act.Survive message ● The training of more than 100 Volunteer Community Educators (VCE) to provide advice on the Prepare.Act.Survive message at the local level, and that number of VCEs constantly growing ● Review of staffing arrangements at Fire Communication Centres to enable increased staff during dangerous fire danger rating days ● An all hazards approach promoting cooperation across all levels of government and partnerships with non-government organisations <p>In addition, the Commonwealth Government is funding the upgrade of the EA system to deliver warnings to mobile phones based on the location of the handset instead of billing address. The Commonwealth funding allows Victoria, on behalf of the other States</p>

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			<p>and Territories, to lead negotiations with each of the carriers in respect to timing and cost of implementing the capability.</p> <p>*Recommendation 1(e) is supported with the exception of community fire refuges (CFRs). The options for shelter in Queensland have been strengthened through a combination of Evacuation Centres outside of the impacted area (as a first resort) and Neighbourhood Safer Places (NSP) (as last resort). In addition, Queensland has robust evacuation arrangements in place.</p>
2	<p>The State revise the approach to community bushfire education in order to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. ensure that its publications and educational materials reflect the revised bushfire safety policy b. equip all fire agency personnel with the information needed to effectively communicate the policy to the public as required c. ensure that in content and delivery the program is flexible enough to engage individuals, households and communities and to accommodate their needs and circumstances d. regularly evaluate the effectiveness of community education programs and amend them as necessary 	Supported	<p>A number of significant new initiatives implemented in Queensland meet the intent of this recommendation – see also response to recommendation 1 (above).</p> <p>Queensland adopted the <i>Are you bushfire prepared? Prepare. Act. Survive</i> (PAS) message in July 2010 for the 2010-2011 bushfire season. The PAS campaign has been implemented through a television commercial, local government liaison, Department of Community Safety (DCS) websites, pamphlets, handouts, DVDs and community presentations and information sessions. The PAS campaign incorporates education and information about the new FDRs, NSPs, Bushfire Survival Plans, and a Traveller's Guide. The effectiveness of the PAS campaign will be evaluated in early 2011.</p> <p>The Commission noted that while leaving early is still the safest option, staying to defend a well-prepared home is also a sound choice in less severe fires (albeit with greater emphasis on prevailing conditions, ability of the residents to defend and the vulnerability of dependants). These elements are well supported by Queensland's PAS campaign.</p>
3	<p>The State establish mechanisms for helping municipal councils to undertake local planning that tailors bushfire safety options to the needs of individual communities. In doing this, councils should:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. urgently develop for communities at risk of bushfire local plans that contain contingency options such as evacuation and shelter b. document in municipal emergency management plans and other relevant plans facilities where vulnerable people are likely to be situated—for example, aged care facilities, hospitals, schools and child care centres c. compile and maintain a list of vulnerable residents who need tailored advice of a recommendation to evacuate and provide this list to local police and anyone else with pre-arranged responsibility for helping vulnerable residents evacuate* 	Supported	<p>Local Disaster Management Plans (LDMPs), developed by Local Disaster Management Groups (LDMGs) set up by local governments, allow for the recording of special needs populations in the community.</p> <p>*Although the recommendation that a list be compiled and maintained of vulnerable residents who need tailored advice of evacuation is supported, the proposal that local governments have responsibility for this is not supported, as it would be highly resource intensive, and would result in duplication and inconsistencies with other list holders. Health and community service groups who interface with vulnerable persons on a day-to-day basis are best suited to identify such persons and to keep centralised records which can be given to various emergency service responders if necessary.</p> <p>The Department of Communities (DoC) and DCS will explore options for accessing lists of vulnerable people from those businesses/organisations who may have access at the time of a disaster or fire emergency, and ensure LDMPs reflect the arrangements and list organisations and agencies with 'after hours' contacts.</p>
4	<p>The State introduce a comprehensive approach to shelter options that includes the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. developing standards for community refuges as a matter of priority and replacing the 2005 Fire Refuges in Victoria: Policy and Practice* 	Supported in part *	<p>*CFRs are not supported due to the current lack of a building construction standard and capacity issues for those who may wish to access one. In addition, the community information and messaging and PAS have as a central theme to leave the area on high level FDR days. Providing a refuge that may potentially be in the path of a fire could quite possibly place people in danger rather than in refuge. The safest place for anyone is to be away from the path of the fire in an unaffected area. Communities will be notified of evacuation centres, outside of the impacted area that will be activated during a</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. designating community refuges—particularly in areas of very high risk—where other bushfire safety options are limited* c. working with municipal councils to ensure that appropriate criteria are used for bushfire shelters, so that people are not discouraged from using a bushfire shelter if there is no better option available d. acknowledging personal shelters around their homes as a fallback option for individuals 		<p>bushfire event should people require shelter.</p> <p>The Queensland Government continues to work with communities to establish evacuation centres situated away from the area for those who leave early, continued preventative/reactive strategies in the areas of fuel reduction, community education, local area plans, personal bushfire plans, access to information and warnings, and the designation of NSPs as places of last resort, as a comprehensive approach to bushfire events.</p> <p>A national standard for the construction of private bushfire bunkers has been developed and will be introduced to the Building Code of Australia (BCA) in 2011. The new standard aims to provide a tenable environment for occupants during the passage of a fire however adherence to the standard does not guarantee a zero risk for occupants. As such, although the standard will be adopted in Queensland, it is not intended that government actively promote the construction and use of private bushfire bunkers.</p>
5	<p>The State introduce a comprehensive approach to evacuation, so that this option in planned, considered and implemented when it is likely to offer a higher level of protection than other contingency options. This approach should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. encourage individuals—especially vulnerable people—to relocate early b. include consideration of plans for assisted evacuation of vulnerable people c. recommend 'emergency evacuation' 	Supported	<p>Current arrangements in Queensland address the intent of this recommendation. In Queensland, every LDMG identifies at least one evacuation centre to be activated for hazards, including flood and cyclone.</p> <p>Queensland already has the legislative authority to evacuate people during emergency events through the <i>Queensland Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990</i> and the <i>Public Safety Preservation Act 1986</i>. Once a disaster is declared, evacuation powers are invoked by the <i>Disaster Management Act 2003</i>. As such, there is no requirement for legislative amendment in Queensland.</p>
6	<p>Victoria lead an initiative of the Ministerial Council for Education, Early Childhood Development and Youth Affairs to ensure that the national curriculum incorporates the history of bushfire in Australia and that existing curriculum areas such as geography, science and environmental studies include elements of bushfire education</p>	Supported	<p>This is supported for progression by Victoria with the Commonwealth Government.</p>
7	<p>The Commonwealth lead an initiative through the Ministerial Council for Police and Emergency Management, facilitated by Emergency Management Australia, to develop a national bushfire awareness campaign</p>	Supported	<p>The Commonwealth has agreed to work with the States and Territories through the Ministerial Council for Police and Emergency Management to develop a national bushfire awareness campaign.</p>
CHAPTER 2 – EMERGENCY AND INCIDENT MANAGEMENT			
8	<p>The Country Fire Authority and the Department of Sustainability and Environment amend their procedures to require the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. that at locations that attract preparedness levels A or B there be a full incident management team under the leadership of an accredited level 3 Incident Controller in position by 10.00 am on days of code red fire danger and a core incident management team (eight personnel) under the leadership 	Not applicable	<p>Queensland uses a different language in relation to Incident Management Teams and also has a more flexible approach than Victoria's preparedness levels A or B. This approach takes account of the characteristics of a particular event, such as the Wildfire Alert Level.</p>

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	<p>of an accredited level 3 Incident Controller in position by 10.00 am on days of extreme fire danger</p> <p>b. that a full level 3 IMT be led by a level 3 Incident Controller unless the State Controller determines otherwise</p>		
9	<p>The Country Fire Authority and the Department of Sustainability and Environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prescribe; and • audit <p>the minimum number and nature of level 3 joint training exercises in which incident management team staff (including volunteers) are required to participate</p>	Supported	Current arrangements in Queensland address the intent of this recommendation as there is already an annual schedule of major and minor training exercises including volunteers, and the testing of Local Action Plans for fires occurs annually.
10	The State clarify whether, during major fires, Victoria Police should discharge its coordination functions from the State Emergency Response Coordination Centre or from the State Control Centre.	Not applicable	In Queensland, state-wide coordination of fire events is the responsibility of QFRS. QPS commands all police activities, resources and functions through the Police Operations Centre (POC). In addition, under the <i>Disaster Management Act 2003</i> , the roles and responsibilities of the Minister, local authorities, State government agencies and individual public service officers during disaster events are clearly defined.
11	<p>The State consider amending the <i>Emergency Management Act 1986</i> and the Emergency Management Manual Victoria in order to achieve the following:</p> <p>a. remove the title of Coordinator in Chief of Emergency Management from the Minister for Police and Emergency Services</p> <p>b. clarify the function and powers of the Minister</p> <p>c. designate the Chief Commissioner of Police as Coordinator in Chief of Emergency Management, who would have primary responsibility for keeping the Minister informed during an emergency</p>	Not applicable	This recommendation does not apply to arrangements in Queensland. Such roles and functions, including that of the Commissioner of the QFRS, are already clearly legislated in Queensland.
12	The State consider either amending the <i>Emergency Management Act 1986</i> or adopting a standing practice to require the Minister for Police and Emergency Services or the Chief Commissioner of Police to consult the Premier about the possibility of declaring a state of disaster for all of or any part of Victoria whenever the Minister or the Chief Commissioner of Police becomes aware of circumstances that make it a reasonable possibility that the criteria for making such a declaration will be satisfied	Not applicable	This recommendation does not apply to arrangements in Queensland. Consultation with the Premier is already required before a disaster declaration can be made where it affects more than one district, under the <i>Disaster Management Act 2003</i> .
13	The State consider amending the <i>Emergency Management Act 1986</i> to introduce a graded scale of emergency declarations short of a state of disaster	Not applicable	Queensland already has adequate arrangements for alternative emergency/incident declarations under the <i>Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990</i> and the <i>Public Safety Preservation Act 1986</i> .

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14	<p>The Victorian fire agencies amend the AIIMS framework before the 2010-11 fires season in order to do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. designate the Information Unit as a separate section reporting directly to the Incident Controller and require that the Information Unit contain a dedicated Public Information Officer whenever a full incident management team is required b. specify a set of functions in relation to which the Deputy Incident Controller for a level 3 incident will have oversight, which may be adjustable for a particular incident by agreement between the Incident Controller and the Deputy Incident Controller c. ensure that an individual with local knowledge is incorporated in an incident management team 	Supported	Queensland will participate in a review of the AIIMS framework through its membership of the AIIMS national steering committee.
15	<p>The Country Fire Authority and the Department of Sustainability and Environment::</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. amend their procedures to require that an incident action plan summary be completed within the first four hours of an incident being reported and be provided to the State Control Centre and, where established, to the relevant Area of Operations Control Centre b. adopt DSE's incident action plan summary as the template to be used by all incident management teams and ensure that the template is included in the online IMT Tool Box c. provide regular training to IMT staff, highlighting the importance of information and reinforcing the support available from specialists within the State Control Centre 	Supported	Current arrangements in Queensland address the intent of this recommendation.
16	<p>The Country Fire Authority and the Department of Sustainability and Environment improve mapping support in the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. DSE providing mapping data free of charge to emergency response agencies b. greatly increasing the CFA's 'write' access to FireMap for incident management team staff c. establishing a joint DSE-CFA training program to ensure that mapping officers in level 2 and 3 incident management teams are fully trained in using FireMap, including in producing fire prediction maps d. requiring before the 2010-11 fire season that FireMap be used for joint incidents* 	Supported	<p>Better mapping information and information sharing is expected to be delivered within the context of the <i>National All-hazards Information Management Interoperability Framework</i>, currently being developed. This Framework is expected to provide the policy rationale for the provision of dynamic data and information sharing between agencies.</p> <p>DCS is currently working on "write-access" functionality within Total Operational Mapping (TOM) (Queensland's equivalent of "FireMap") and expects this will be ready for the 2011 fire season.</p> <p>DCS aims to make TOM as user friendly as possible so as not to require additional resources to train staff. DCS conducts "awareness sessions" for both non-operational and operational staff throughout the year.</p> <p>Emergency Management Queensland's (EMQ) Total Operational Mapping program (ETOM – similar to TOM) is being progressed, the aim of which is provide a platform to display data from all agencies involved in disaster operations.</p> <p>*This is not applicable to Queensland.</p>

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17	<p>The Country Fire Authority and the Department of Sustainability and Environment establish before the 2010–11 fire season:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. a uniform, objective and transparent process based on the current DSE approach for the accreditation of level 3 Incident Controllers b. a performance review system for level 3 Incident Controllers* c. a traineeship program for progression from level 2 to level 3 incident management team positions 	Not applicable*	<p>The primary purpose of this recommendation is to allow for more flexibility between the CFA & DSE. The aim is to align the two separate agencies to a common level of training that would allow an Incident Controller from either agency to manage large fires that moved from public to private land (or visa-versa) without having to change Incident Controllers. This is not required in the Queensland environment as Queensland has a single statewide fire service and Incident Controllers are appropriately trained.</p> <p>*The concept of performance review is supported and is already in place in Queensland. Incident Controllers undergo supervised professional development and complete activity logs.</p> <p>As Incident Controllers are not accredited to a particular level in Queensland, a traineeship program to facilitate promotion is not applicable. See also Recommendations 8 and 9.</p>
18	The Country Fire Authority and the Department of Sustainability and Environment amend their procedures to require that a suitably experienced, qualified and competent person be appointed as Incident Controller, regardless of the control agency for the fire	Supported	Current arrangements in Queensland address the intent of this recommendation.
19	The Country Fire Authority provide to all CFA volunteers an identification card or similar to facilitate their passage through roadblocks established in accordance with the 2009 Guidelines for the Operation of Traffic Management Points during Wildfires	Not supported	In Queensland, volunteers who are involved in fighting bushfires will usually be in uniform which includes appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and will usually deploy as part of a team and be known to those in the area. An ID card is not necessary for these volunteers.
CHAPTER 3 – FIREGROUND RESPONSE			
20	<p>The Country Fire Authority and the Department of Sustainability and Environment amend their policies on aerial preparedness and standby arrangements, their dispatch protocols and the management of aircraft in order to do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. require that at locations that attract the risk assessment or preparedness level A on code red days all personnel needed for air operations must be on standby by 10.00 am b. establish a system that enables the dispatch of aircraft to fires in high-risk areas without requiring a request from an Incident Controller or the State Duty Officer 	Supported	Current arrangements in Queensland address the intent of this recommendation.
21	The State, in conjunction with Emergency Management Australia and the Department of Defence, develop an agreement that allows Commonwealth aerial resources that are suitable for firefighting and support activities to be incorporated in preparedness plans and used on days of high fire risk	Supported	Queensland supports Victoria's action of seeking to develop an agreement with the Commonwealth as per the recommendation. Queensland will participate in discussions at the national level.
22	The Country Fire Authority and the Department of Sustainability and Environment standardise their operating systems and information and	Supported in-principle	This recommendation is being considered in the context of work being undertaken by the Queensland Government to assess options for the delivery of public sector front-line communications. This recommendation is supported in-principle, pending the outcome of

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	communications technologies with the aim of achieving greater efficiency and interoperability between agencies		the sector-wide options assessment (expected in mid 2011).
23	The Country Fire Authority review and improve its communications strategy as a matter of priority and develop a program for identifying and responding to black spots in radio coverage	Supported in-principle	See Recommendation 22.
24	The Country Fire Authority and the Department of Sustainability and Environment amend their procedures for investigating safety incidents and 'near-misses' to ensure that all dangerous incidents, including back-burns, are fully investigated and that all relevant people are consulted and informed of the results	Supported	Current arrangements in Queensland address the intent of this recommendation.
25	The Country Fire Authority and the Department of Sustainability and Environment require without exception that all relevant staff be trained in the need for Incident Controller approval to be obtained before a back-burn is lit	Supported	Current arrangements in Queensland address the intent of this recommendation.
26	The Country Fire Authority and the Department of Sustainability and Environment adopt the title 'safety officer' (as opposed to 'safety adviser') and require without exception that a safety officer be appointed to every level 3 incident management team	Not applicable	The recommendation to change the title of a "safety advisor" to "safety officer" and for a safety officer to be appointed to all level 3 IMTs is not applicable to the Queensland context. The term "safety advisor" is well-understood in Queensland by those involved in firefighting and there is no benefit in changing the title. Safety advisors are already present at every incident.
	CHAPTER 4 – ELECTRICITY CAUSED FIRE		
27	<p>The State amend the Regulations under Victoria's Electricity Safety Act 1998 and otherwise take such steps as may be required to give effect to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the progressive replacement of all SWER (single-wire earth return) power lines in Victoria with aerial bundled cable, underground cabling or other technology that delivers greatly reduced bushfire risk. The replacement program should be completed in the areas of highest bushfire risk within 10 years and should continue in areas of lower bushfire risk as the lines reach the end of their engineering lives b. the progressive replacement of all 22-kilovolt distribution feeders with aerial bundled cable, underground cabling or other technology that delivers greatly reduced bushfire risk as the feeders reach the end of their engineering lives. Priority should be given to distribution feeders in the areas of highest bushfire risk 	Further analysis required	There are significant differences between Queensland's and Victoria's fire risk environments and electricity infrastructure. There is a lower likelihood of electricity assets in Queensland starting fires, because Queensland does not experience the catastrophic weather conditions that prevail during the Victorian fire season. However, the recommendations relating to electricity-caused fire will be examined in the Queensland context by the Queensland Government which will receive advice from key stakeholders in the electricity sector. Queensland's position will be determined by mid-2011.

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28	The State (through Energy Safe Victoria) require distribution businesses to change their asset inspection standards and procedures to require that all SWER lines and all 22-kilovolt feeders in areas of high bushfire risk are inspected at least every three years	Further analysis required	See Recommendation 27
29	The State (through Energy Safe Victoria) require distribution businesses to review and modify their current practices, standards and procedures for the training and auditing of asset inspectors to ensure that registered training organisations provide adequate theoretical and practical training for asset inspectors	Further analysis required	See Recommendation 27
30	The State amend the regulatory framework for electricity safety to require that distribution businesses adopt, as part of their management plans, measures to reduce the risks posed by hazard trees—that is, trees that are outside the clearance zone but that could come into contact with an electric power line having regard to foreseeable local conditions	Further analysis required	See Recommendation 27
31	Municipal councils include in their municipal fire prevention plans for areas of high bushfire risk provision for the identification of hazard trees and for notifying the responsible entities with a view to having the situation redressed	Further analysis required	See Recommendation 27
32	<p>The State (through Energy Safe Victoria) require distribution businesses to do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. disable the reclose function on the automatic circuit reclosers on all SWER lines for the six weeks of greatest risk in every fire season b. adjust the reclose function on the automatic circuit reclosers on all 22-kilovolt feeders on all total fire ban days to permit only one reclose attempt before lockout 	Further analysis required	See Recommendation 27
33	<p>The State (through Energy Safe Victoria) require distribution businesses to do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. fit spreaders to any lines with a history of clashing or the potential to do so b. fit or retrofit all spans that are more than 300 metres long with vibration dampers as soon as is reasonably practicable 	Further analysis required	See Recommendation 27
34	The State amend the regulatory framework for electricity safety to strengthen Energy Safe Victoria's mandate in relation to the prevention and mitigation of electricity-caused bushfires and to require it to fulfil that mandate	Further analysis required	See Recommendation 27

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	CHAPTER 5 – DELIBERATELY LIT FIRES		
35	<p>Victoria Police continue to pursue a coordinated statewide approach to arson prevention and regularly review its approach to ensure that it contains the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. high-level commitment from senior police b. a research program aimed at refining arson prevention and detection strategies c. centralised coordination that includes comprehensive training, periodic evaluation of arson prevention strategies and programs, and promotion of best-practice prevention approaches d. a requirement that all fire-prone police service areas have arson prevention plans and programs, according to their level of risk 	Supported	Queensland is currently implementing a whole-of-government approach to arson prevention programs and plans and participating in the national discussions for framework development.
36	The Commonwealth, states and territories continue to pursue the National Action Plan to Reduce Bushfire Arson in Australia, giving priority to producing a nationally consistent framework for data collection and evaluating current and proposed programs in order to identify and share best-practice approaches	Supported	A National Strategy to Reduce Bushfire Arson is currently being developed by a joint Ministerial Council of Police and Emergency Management Working Group.
	CHAPTER 6 – PLANNING AND BUILDING		
37	<p>The State identify a central point of responsibility for and expertise in mapping bushfire risk to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. review urgently the mapping criteria at present used by the Country Fire Authority to map the Wildfire Management Overlay, to ensure that the mapping used to determine building and planning controls is based on the best available science and takes account of all relevant aspects of bushfire risk b. map and designate Bushfire-prone Areas for the purposes of planning and building controls, in consultation with municipal councils and fire agencies c. finalise the alignment of site-assessment methods for planning and building purposes, taking into account bushfire risk to human safety as well as to property 	Supported in-principle	<p>Issues identified by the Commission will be addressed in the current review of the State Planning Policy 1/03: <i>Mitigating the Adverse Impacts of Flood, Bushfire and Landslide</i> (SPP1/03), expected to be completed in 2013.</p> <p>SPP1/03 specifies criteria for mapping high, medium and low hazard areas and nominates the QFRS as the contact point for local government mapping of bushfire hazard used in planning schemes.</p> <p>Hazard maps produced by QFRS are provided to local governments as a guide to bushfire hazard conditions.</p> <p>The SPP 1/03 also requires local governments to refer variations in the bushfire hazard assessment methodology to QFRS</p> <p>Local governments are required to develop and maintain Local Disaster Management Plans under the Disaster Management Act 2003. The plans must include provision for the State's strategic policy framework for disaster and the local government's policies for disaster management and the roles and responsibilities of organisations involved in disaster operations and management for the area. The plans also reflect and plan for the hazard events that are likely to occur in the local area, given its natural risk profile.</p>
38	<p>The State implement a regional settlement policy that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. takes account of the management of bushfire risk, including that associated with small, undeveloped rural lots 	Supported in-principle	See Recommendation 37

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. includes a process for responding to bushfire risk at the planning stage for new urban developments in regional cities, the process being similar to that used for new developments in Melbourne's Urban Growth Zone 		
39	<p>The State amend the Victoria Planning Provisions relating to bushfire to ensure that the provisions give priority to the protection of human life, adopt a clear objective of substantially restricting development in the areas of highest bushfire risk—giving due consideration to biodiversity conservation—and provide clear guidance for decision makers. The amendments should take account of the conclusions reached by the Commission and do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. outline the State's objectives for managing bushfire risk through land-use planning in an amended state planning policy for bushfire, as set out in clause 15.07 of the Victoria Planning Provisions b. allow municipal councils to include a minimum lot size for use of land for a dwelling, both with and without a permit, in a schedule to each of the Rural Living Zone, Green Wedge Zone, Green Wedge A Zone, Rural Conservation Zone, Farming Zone and Rural Activity Zone c. amend clause 44.06 of the Victoria Planning Provisions to provide a comprehensive Bushfire-prone Overlay provision 	Supported in-principle	See Recommendation 37
40	<p>The Country Fire Authority amend its guidelines for assessing permit applications for dwellings, non-dwellings and subdivisions in the Bushfire-prone Overlay in order to accommodate the amendments to the Wildfire Management Overlay that are implemented as a result of recommendation 39 and make the guidelines available to municipal councils and the public. The revised guidelines should do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. substantially restrict new developments and subdivisions in those areas of highest risk in the Bushfire-prone Overlay b. set out the CFA's guidelines for assessing permit applications for dwellings, non-dwellings and subdivisions—including the minimum defendable space requirements for different risk levels c. clarify that the CFA will approve new developments and subdivisions only if the recommended bushfire protection measures—including the minimum defendable space—can be created and 	Supported in-principle	See Recommendation 37

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	<p>maintained on a continuing basis</p> <p>d. emphasise the need for enduring permit conditions—in particular, conditions for the creation and maintenance of minimum defensible space to be maintained for the life of the development</p>		
41	<p>The State:</p> <p>a. amend the Victoria Planning Provisions to require that, when assessing a permit to remove native vegetation around an existing dwelling, the responsible authority and the Department of Sustainability and Environment, as referral authority, take into account fire hazard and give weight to fire protection purposes</p> <p>b. develop guidelines for determining the maximum level of native vegetation removal for bushfire risk mitigation, beyond which level the application would be rejected</p>	Supported in-principle	See Recommendation 37
42	The Department of Sustainability and Environment develop and administer a collective offset solution for individual landholders who are permitted to remove native vegetation for the purpose of fire protection	Supported in-principle	See Recommendation 37
43	The Department of Sustainability and Environment conduct biodiversity mapping identifying flora, fauna and any threatened species throughout Victoria and make the results publicly available. The format used should be compatible with that used for Bushfire-prone Area mapping	Supported	Current arrangements in Queensland address the intent of this recommendation.
44	The Country Fire Authority produce for community guidance material on fire-resistant landscape and garden design, including a list of fire-resistant species	Supported	The Department of Community Safety will implement this recommendation.
45	The State press municipal councils—in particular, Murrindindi Shire Council—to urgently adopt a bushfire policy in their Local Planning Policy Framework and incorporate bushfire risk management in their planning policies and strategies for rebuilding communities such as Marysville, Kinglake and others affected by the January–February 2009 fires	Supported	Current arrangements in Queensland address the intent of this recommendation.
46	The State develop and implement a retreat and resettlement strategy for existing developments in areas of unacceptably high bushfire risk, including a scheme for non-compulsory acquisition by the State of land in these areas	Not supported	Queensland's risk profile for bushfire events does not warrant resettlement as a way of mitigating bushfire risk. This recommendation is also not supported by Victoria, New South Wales, Tasmania and South Australia.

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47	<p>Standards Australia do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. amend the objective of AS 3959-2009, Construction of Buildings in Bushfire-prone Areas, to ensure that it incorporates reducing the risk of ignition from ember attack b. review, and amend as appropriate, the testing methods prescribed in its standards for Tests on Elements of Construction for Buildings Exposed to Simulated Bushfire Attack (AS 1530.8.1 and AS 1530.8.2) to ensure that, so far as is possible, the methods provide a reliable predictor of the performance of construction elements under bushfire conditions 	Supported	Queensland supports progression of this recommendation by Standards Australia.
48	<p>The Australian Building Codes Board do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. amend the performance requirements in the Building Code of Australia to ensure that they incorporate reducing the risk of ignition from ember attack b. work with Standards Australia to effect expeditious continuing review and development of AS 3959, Construction of Buildings in Bushfire-prone Areas, and other bushfire-related standards referred to in the Building Code of Australia c. negotiate with Standards Australia and SAI Global Ltd an arrangement for free online access to AS 3959-2009, Construction of Buildings in Bushfire-prone Areas, the other Australian standards referred to in AS 3959-2009, and any other bushfire-related Australian standards referred to in the Building Code of Australia d. amend the Building Code of Australia to remove deemed-to-satisfy provisions for the construction of buildings in BAL-FZ (the Flame Zone)* e. include in the Building Code of Australia bushfire construction provisions for non-residential buildings that will be occupied by people who are particularly vulnerable to bushfire attack, such as schools, child care centres, hospitals and aged care facilities* 	Supported in part*	<p>Recommendation 48(a-c) are supported for progression by the ABCB.</p> <p>*The Government does not support the removal of deemed-to-satisfy provisions or the inclusion of bushfire construction provisions for non-residential buildings in Queensland at this time. These recommendations require further consideration by the ABCB. Queensland supports the Victorian position that the removal of deemed-to-satisfy provisions is not supported on the basis that this would unreasonably increase the cost of building in fire-affected communities; it will not increase the safety of communities in fire-prone areas; and deemed-to-satisfy provisions are important to encourage innovation and improvement in building.</p>
49	<p>The State modify its adoption of the Building Code of Australia for the following purposes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. to remove deemed-to-satisfy provisions for the construction of buildings in BAL-FZ (the Flame Zone) b. to apply bushfire construction provisions to non-residential buildings that will be occupied by people who are particularly vulnerable to bushfire attack, such as schools, child care 	Not supported	See Recommendation 48. The Queensland Government does not currently support the implementation of this recommendation in Queensland as it is likely to have significant cost impacts on building in these areas.

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	centres, hospitals and aged care facilities c. other than in exceptional circumstances, to apply a minimum AS 3959-2009 construction level of BAL-12.5 to all new buildings and extensions in bushfire-prone areas		
50	Standards Australia move expeditiously to develop a standard for bushfire sprinklers and sprayers	Supported	Standards Australia is developing an Australian Standard® for Bushfire Water Spray Systems and is currently considering the technical, net benefit and other issues in relation to the development of this standard.
51	The Victorian Building Commission, in conjunction with the Country Fire Authority, develop, publish and provide to the community and industry information about ways in which existing buildings in bushfire-prone areas can be modified to incorporate bushfire safety measures	Supported	Aside from the significant resource and cost implications for the development and publication of materials, it is preferable for a nationally consistent document to be developed by the Commonwealth and the ABCB. If this does not occur at the national level, Queensland will seek to gain leverage from materials produced by the Victorian Building Commission and the CFA.
52	The State develop and implement, in consultation with local government, a mechanism for sign-off by municipal councils of any permit conditions imposed under the Bushfire-prone Overlay and the regular assessment of landowners' compliance with conditions	Supported in-principle	This recommendation will be progressed by the Department of Infrastructure and Planning through further consultation with local government and the Department of Justice and Attorney-General.
53	The State amend s. 32 of the <i>Sale of Land Act 1962</i> to require that a vendor's statement include whether the land is in a designated Bushfire-prone Area, a statement about the standard (if any) to which the dwelling was constructed, the bushfire attack level assessment at the time of construction (where relevant) and a current bushfire attack level assessment of the site of the dwelling	Supported in-principle	This recommendation will be progressed by the Department of Infrastructure and Planning through further consultation with local government and the Department of Justice and Attorney-General.
54	The State amend the <i>Country Fire Authority Act 1958</i> to enable the Chief Officer to delegate the power to issue fire prevention notices	Not applicable	This recommendation is not applicable to Queensland because local planning provisions already contain bushfire information and policies in addition to state planning provisions, and authorised fire officers already have the power to issue fire prevention notices under the <i>Fire and Rescue Service Act 1990</i> .
55	The State initiate the development of education and training options to improve understanding of bushfire risk management in the building and planning regimes by: a. providing regular training and guidance material to planning and building practitioners b. helping a suitable tertiary institution design and implement a course on bushfire planning and design in Victoria	Supported	Practitioners in Queensland are already supported by SPP1/03 which assists local government planners to address bushfire hazards, and Building Codes Queensland (BCQ) and DIP conduct general training and education seminars across the state which could be augmented by the development of nationally consistent training and education options.

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	CHAPTER 7 – LAND AND FUEL MANAGEMENT		
56	The State fund and commit to implementing a long-term program of prescribed burning based on an annual rolling target of 5 per cent minimum of public land	Supported	<p>This recommendation is supported in part, because Queensland's long-term program for prescribed burning is based on a percentage of total land area in some cases while other targets are based on risk such as weather conditions, fuel loads and vegetation types.</p> <p>Queensland currently has in place an Interagency Protocol for Fire Management that establishes cooperative arrangements and broad principles under which fire is managed across a large proportion of public land in Queensland.</p> <p>For national parks, other conservation reserves and state forests, a long term rolling program of planned burning is well established (since 2003) within a comprehensive planning, implementation and reporting framework known as the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services (QPWS) Fire Management System. This is managed by DERM through over 600 trained fire fighters.</p> <p>The annual target of 5% of the total area of DERM's terrestrial managed estate (national parks, other conservation reserves and state forests) is supported, and is the target currently used by DERM.</p> <p>For management of fuel loads on the remainder of land, unallocated state land, allocated state land and state-managed land, DERM, TMR, LGAQ, QR Limited, QFRS and others support a risk based approach to hazard mitigation rather than applying a percentage across land tenures.</p>
57	The DSE report annually on prescribed burning outcomes in a manner that meets public accountability objectives, including publishing details of targets, area burnt, funds expended on the program, and impacts on biodiversity	Supported	Current arrangements in Queensland address the intent of this recommendation.
58	The Department of Sustainability and Environment significantly upgrade its program of long-term data collection to monitor and model the effects of its prescribed burning programs and of bushfires on biodiversity in Victoria	Supported	Current arrangements in Queensland address the intent of this recommendation.
59	<p>The Department of Sustainability and Environment amend the Code of Practice for Fire Management on Public Land in order to achieve the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> provide a clear statement of objectives, expressed as measurable outcomes include an explicit risk-analysis model for more objective and transparent resolution of competing objectives, where human life is the highest priority specify the characteristics of fire management zones—including burn size, percentage area burnt within the prescribed burn, and residual fuel loading adopt the use of the term 'bushfire' rather than 'wildfire' 	Not applicable*	<p>The code referenced in this recommendation is relevant to Victoria only.</p> <p>* The Rural Land Management Group of the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC) is currently reviewing a change of terminology of wildfire and bushfire. Queensland supports the use of the term "bushfire" and will participate in the AFAC review and the national debate on the issue, and will adopt the consensus outcome from these processes.</p>

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60	The State amend the exemptions in clause 52.17-6 of the Victoria Planning Provisions to ensure that the provisions allow for a broad range of roadside works capable of reducing fire risk and provide specifically for a new exemption where the purpose of the works is to reduce bushfire risk	Supported	Current legislation in Queensland allows for roadside works to reduce fire risk, and does not impede fire prevention activities on either State managed roads or local government managed roads. Work is also being undertaken to align legislation relating to the approval processes for clearing of vegetation, providing for removal for the purposes of safety and emergency.
61	The State and Commonwealth provide for municipal councils adequate guidance on resolving the competing tensions arising from the legislation affecting roadside clearing and, where necessary, amend environment protection legislation to facilitate annual bushfire-prevention activities by the appropriate agencies	Supported	The Queensland Government will work with local councils to ensure they are familiar with the requirements of any new legislation.
62	VicRoads implement a systematic state wide program of bushfire risk assessment for all roads for which it is responsible, to ensure conformity with the obligations in s. 43 of the <i>Country Fire Authority Act 1958</i> and with the objectives expressed in the VicRoads 1985 Code of Practice	Supported	The Department of Transport and Main Roads is developing a Fire Risk Management Plan that will include an integrated fire planning and risk assessment process, which will meet the intent of the recommendation to introduce a state-wide program of bushfire risk for state owned roads.
	CHAPTER 10 – ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE		
63	<p>The State enact legislation designed to achieve two specific ends:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. appoint a Fire Commissioner as an independent statutory officer responsible to the Minister for Police and Emergency Services and as the senior operational firefighter in Victoria b. make the Chief Fire Officer of the Department of Sustainability and Environment a statutory appointment <p>The Fire Commissioner should have responsibility for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. promoting and directing reform aimed at increasing the operational capability, interoperability and resilience of Victoria's fire services b. developing and building operational capacity to prepare for the days of highest bushfire risk and exercising control over level 3 fires as the permanent State Controller c. providing to government periodic advice on the metropolitan fire district boundary on the basis of triggers, frequency and criteria approved by government d. representing Victorian interests on operational matters in national committees 	Not applicable	<p>This recommendation is not applicable to Queensland, which already has a single fire and rescue service led by the Fire Commissioner.</p> <p>The Fire Commissioner has legislative responsibility and authority for all aspects of the fire and rescue service.</p>

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64	<p>The State replace the Fire Services Levy with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a property-based levy; and • introduce concessions for low-income earners 	Not applicable	Victoria's Fire Services Levy is a levy on insurance premiums. This is not applicable to Queensland which has a property-based levy system - a compulsory urban property-based levy and concessions currently apply to pensioners. Local governments in non-urban areas may collect a levy as a rate or charge to be distributed to Rural Fire Brigades.
CHAPTER 11 – RESEARCH AND EVALUATION			
65	The Commonwealth establish a national centre for bushfire research in collaboration with other Australian jurisdictions to support pure, applied and long-term research in the physical, biological and social sciences relevant to bushfires and to promote continuing research and scholarship in related disciplines	Supported	Queensland supports progression of this recommendation by the Commonwealth Government.
CHAPTER 12 – MONITORING IMPLEMENTATION			
66	The State appoint an independent monitor or the Victorian Auditor-General to assess progress with implementing the Commission's recommendations and report to the Parliament and the people of Victoria by 31 July 2012	Supported*	<p>The Queensland Audit Office will be engaged to conduct a performance audit of Queensland's progress in implementing applicable recommendations</p> <p>*The timeline for conducting an audit of Queensland's progress by 31 July 2012 is not supported for a number of reasons. A timeframe of 31 July 2013 will allow sufficient time for initiatives to be implemented and become established, and performance to be able to be more accurately assessed.</p>
REFLECTIONS			
67	That the State consider the development of legislation for the conduct of inquiries in Victoria – in particular, the conduct of royal commissions	Not applicable	This recommendation relates to the conduct of inquiries in Victoria, in particular, the conduct of royal commissions and is therefore not applicable to Queensland.