

# Media Release

**The Hon Lisa Neville MP**

Minister for Police and Emergency Services

Minister for Water



Friday, 13 November 2020

## INDEPENDENT FIRE DISTRICT REVIEW PANEL ESTABLISHED

The Victorian Government has appointed Ms Valerie Callister PSM as the Chairperson of the independent Fire District Review Panel, along with committee members Ms Anna Kilborn and Mr Michael Walker AFSM.

The Fire District Review Panel has been established to independently advise on any possible changes to the Fire Rescue Victoria fire district boundaries, providing guidance on whether any changes in fire risk – including population growth, service demand and land use – require changes to the fire district boundaries.

Review of the fire district boundaries will be undertaken by the Fire District Review Panel at least every four years. It will consult with local councils and all relevant agencies, including the Chief Officer of the Country Fire Authority (CFA).

If the panel proposes a change to the district, it must allow up to one year for the CFA to address any identified change in fire risk, before providing advice to Minister for Police and Emergency Services Lisa Neville.

The three inaugural appointees bring valuable and diverse experience, and a commitment to capacity building in regional areas and the state's fire and rescue services.

Valerie Callister has worked in a number of senior roles in the public and community sectors, including Regional Director of the Department of Human Services – Gippsland Region, President of the Latrobe Regional Hospital Board, and Chief Executive Officer of the Latrobe Community Health Service.

Ms Callister was previously the Chair of the Gippsland Emergency Management Relief and Recovery Planning and Preparedness Committee and was awarded a Public Service Medal for outstanding public service, especially in the areas of relief and recovery following natural disasters in 2012.

Anna Kilborn is an environmental scientist and planner with extensive experience across Australia in natural resource management, regional infrastructure projects, strategic planning and policy development and has helped develop large-scale emergency preparedness for transport and mining industries in Australia, New Zealand and the Asia-Pacific.

Ms Kilborn is currently a member of the Victorian Environmental Assessment Council, where she provides independent and strategic advice to government on issues relating to management of Victoria's environment and natural resources on public land.

Michael Walker is an experienced firefighter, who joined the Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB) in 1976 and worked in the organisation until retiring as an Assistant Chief Fire Officer in 2015. He received an Australian Fire Service in 2007 and a National Emergency Medal in 2014 for services performed during the 2009 Victorian Bushfires.

Mr Walker held a range of key operational roles, including Acting Director Operations, and Acting Deputy Chief Fire Officer. He was a member of small team that re-wrote the Emergency Management Arrangements for Victoria and completed a review of marine rescue operations along the Victorian coastline for the then Department of Justice.

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## **Quotes attributable to Minister for Police and Emergency Services Lisa Neville**

*“These three highly capable individuals will bring diverse and valuable insights to the Fire District Review Panel and will prioritise the needs of our fire services and communities – I congratulate them on their appointment.”*

*“The Fire District Review Panel will work closely with communities and fire agencies in ensuring our emergency services and fire boundaries can adapt to meet modern demands and evolving landscapes.”*