

Media Release

The Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP

Minister for Energy, the Environment and Climate Change
Minister for Solar Homes



Saturday, 6 November 2021

RECRUITMENT AND RECORD INVESTMENT AHEAD OF FIRE SEASON

The Andrews Labor Government's \$517 million investment into bushfire preparedness is making Victoria fire ready this season, with the recruiting and training of more than 600 seasonal firefighters now ready for action.

A further 154 Fire Operations Officers have been added to Forest Fire Management Victoria's (FFMVic) ranks, creating a firefighting workforce more than 1000 strong including up to 300 new recruits ready for the summer.

FFMVic is adapting to the impacts of climate change, delivering a year-round planned burning program, with more than 470 burns completed in the 2020-21 financial year, covering more than 133,000 hectares of public land.

An additional 49 burns covering more than 2,000 hectares have been completed since 1 July 2021 to the end of October.

Throughout the reporting period FFMVic has been able to do more precision burning close to where people live to help protect homes, catchments, power supplies, schools, hospitals and key transport routes. As well as these high priority burns, crews have supported 15 cultural burns led by Traditional Owner Groups.

More than \$35 million has been directed to enhancing the state's strategic fuel break network with more than 484 kilometres now upgraded and another 963 kilometres scheduled for completion by June 2022.

Fuel breaks are vital to protect communities and the environment from the impacts of bushfire and assist firefighters to manage and suppress fires.

An additional 18,888 hectares of mechanical treatment was conducted in the reporting period further decreasing fire risk in our parks and forests.

The recent recruitment of seasonal firefighters follows the record \$339.5 million invested in the *Victorian Budget 2021/22* to ensure access to state-of-the-art technology, fire towers and equipment, and an additional \$133 million for radio upgrades helping FFMVic crews communicate better with other emergency services.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Energy, Environment and Climate Change Lily D'Ambrosio

"Victoria is one of the most bushfire prone regions in the world – the impacts of climate change and associated extreme weather events are changing the nature of bushfires."

"We're constantly adapting to the challenges of climate change ensuring the risk from bushfires is minimised and we are prepared for the summer ahead."

Quote attributable to Forest Fire Management Victoria Chief Fire Officer Chris Hardman

"We look for opportunities to conduct our planned burns 365-days-a-year, focusing on precision burns with the biggest community benefit to protect where people live, we also put more work into slashing and mulching and growing our strategic fuel break network to protect lives, homes and property."