

Media Release

The Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP

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



Thursday, 3 March 2022

REDUCING BUSHFIRE RISK WITH PLANNED BURNING

The Victorian Government's planned burning operations will ramp up this month, following mild weather over summer and ideal autumn conditions.

The planned burning program plays a vital role in our bushfire preparedness and risk reduction strategy to protect Victorians, property and the environment.

March and April usually have the most stable weather for planned to burn, however wet weather caused by La Niña, climate change and changing weather patterns have caused higher forest moisture levels and lower temperatures, creating more opportunities for planned burning throughout the year.

There are approximately 1400 burns planned for the next three years – with the majority to occur over the next two months – to reduce fuel loads and to maintain, regenerate and increase plant species diversity.

When crews can't do planned burns, they use other treatments like clearing, mowing, mulching, slashing and strategic fuel breaks, which make it easier, faster and safer for firefighters to access and suppress fires.

The Government has also partnered with Traditional Owners so fire can be used to support Cultural and land management aspirations including managing food, medicines, flora regeneration, fauna habitat protection and healing Country's spirit. There are 169 cultural burns planned across public land for the next three years.

The Government invested \$517 million into bushfire preparedness this fire season including recruiting and training of more than 600 seasonal firefighters.

More than 470 burns were completed in the 2020-21 financial year, covering more than 133,000 hectares of public land. The program is based on scientific evidence, local knowledge and continuous improvement to ensure efforts are focused where they are most effective.

The annual Joint Fuel Management Program, developed by Forest Fire Management Victoria, the Country Fire Authority and local communities, plans our bushfire risk management approach for public and private land.

To find out when and where planned burns are happening, sign up to vic.gov.au/plannedburns, download the VicEmergency app or call the VicEmergency hotline at 1800 226 226.

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

"We need to burn when conditions are right, to reduce the risk of fighting larger bushfires later – it's crucial we are prepared for bushfires especially as their frequency and severity increases due to climate change."

"Investing in risk reduction strategies like planned burns is vital to protect property and our precious environment."