

Media Release

The Hon Lily D'Ambrosio MP

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



Saturday, 8 May 2021

RECORD INVESTMENT TO PROTECT VICTORIA FROM BUSHFIRE RISK

The Andrews Labor Government today unveiled a record funding package to protect local communities across the state – aimed at reducing bushfire risk for the longer, hotter fire seasons to come.

As part of the *Victorian Budget 2021/22*, a \$517 million investment will deliver important technology upgrades for firefighters and improved risk management across agencies to reduce the risk of bushfires in a changing climate.

An investment of \$339.5 million will continue to fund our Forest Fire Management workers and firefighters - as well make sure our technology, fire towers and equipment stays up to scratch.

A \$133 million investment will deliver brand-new digital radios for Forest Fire Management Victoria staff – helping them avoid black spots and communicate better with other emergency services.

Better communication on the ground and in remote areas will help detect fires earlier and improve efforts to contain them faster.

Funding will also further deliver on recommendations of two inquiries into the devastating 2019 and 2020 bushfires by the Inspector General for Emergency Management and the Bushfires Royal Commission.

In response to the Inspector General's call for greater coordination and leadership, more than \$21 million will be provided for a new Office of Bushfire Risk Management to bring together land and fire managers, so they can work more closely to reduce the risk of bushfires on public and private land.

The Office will work with Forest Fire Management Victoria, the Country Fire Authority, Emergency Management Victoria, local government, landholders, road authorities and the community. It will have a key role in delivering the improvements to land and fire management recommended by the Inspector-General.

A Budget boost of \$15.6 million will help keep our state safe, addressing long grasses and other highly flammable undergrowth across Victoria, including delivering fuel management along major arterial road and rail corridors, additional planned burns, new specialist skills and machinery, and advanced bushfire risk modelling.

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

"Our first responders and local communities band together to do an incredible job protecting Victorians throughout bushfire season."

"While we can't ever thank them enough – we can invest in the equipment, technology and infrastructure they need to reduce the risk of the next bushfire season."