



2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission

MEDIA RELEASE

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FINAL REPORT RELEASED

The 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission today handed its final report to the Governor of Victoria, Professor David de Kretser AC.

The four-volume report is the culmination of an 18-month inquiry into the causes and circumstances of the fires that devastated parts of Victoria in January and February 2009, killing 173 people.

The Commissioners, the Hon. Bernard Teague AO, Ms Susan Pascoe AM and Mr Ron McLeod AM, have made 67 recommendations which will now be considered by the Victorian Government and others.

“It has been an exhausting but tremendously rewarding experience,” said the Commissioners.

“From the outset we have sought to understand the reality of bushfires and the impact on people’s lives. We began with the community consultations and continued through public submissions and personal testimony from 100 lay witnesses.”

The Commissioners felt strongly that their work should contribute to individual and community healing. “We hope we have achieved that in a small but significant way,” they said. “As much as possible those most directly impacted by the fires were given a voice and their stories and views were heard.”

The Commissioners also expressed their gratitude to the many other witnesses, especially emergency services personnel, who gave evidence.

“For many in the emergency services it was often an uncomfortable and difficult experience to be questioned about their actions on the day. But their input was invaluable in helping us formulate our recommendations.”

The Commissioners said the protection of human life and the safety of communities had guided every aspect of their work.

“Today, with the delivery of our final report, it is appropriate that we pause to remember the 173 people who died and those they left behind,” they said.

“For many in the fire-affected areas there is still a long way to go in the recovery process, both emotionally and physically. They will need our help and support for many months to come.”

The final report can be accessed on our website, www.royalcommission.vic.gov.au. Copies can be ordered through the Victorian Government at <http://www.vic.gov.au/2009-victorian-bushfires-royal-commission-final-report-pre-order.html>, or by phoning 1800 463 684.

For further information, please contact Quentin Fogarty, Public Affairs Manager, 0421 084 089.