



2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission

MEDIA RELEASE

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LIBRARIES TO HOST ROYAL COMMISSION HEARINGS

Libraries across Victoria have agreed to provide facilities for the public to view live streaming of the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission hearings beginning in the County Court on Monday, 11 May.

Many libraries have also agreed to provide access to the transcripts from the hearings.

Chair of the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission, Bernard Teague, said the offer from Victoria's 260 libraries, including those in the fire-affected areas, was greatly appreciated.

"People affected by the bushfires who are unable to view the hearings at home will now be able to view proceedings at their local library and to access transcripts," said Commissioner Teague.

The State Library of Victoria has also agreed to stream the hearings on a large projection screen in its Experimedia room which can hold up to 300 people. The library will also provide access to copies of transcripts for the public.

The State Library will stream the first four days of hearings, from Monday to Thursday, and will extend this if there is a public demand. People wishing to view the hearings at the State Library are reminded that the library is open to the public from 10am each day.

"We are absolutely delighted to be assisting the Royal Commission in making the webcast and transcripts freely and publicly available," said Shane Carmody, Director of Collections and Access at the State Library.

As well as the State Library, metropolitan and regional libraries across the State have agreed to participate in various ways including providing access to PCs, promoting the web-streaming site on their own web sites, and providing copies of transcripts from the hearings.

Murrindindi Library Service, which has several libraries in one of the areas worst affected on Black Saturday, also provides a mobile library service to Buxton, Strath Creek, Eildon and Flowerdale.

"Some people might want to use our mobile service to view the web-streaming or to view and download transcripts of the hearings," said a library spokesperson. "All they have to do is bring along a USB memory stick."

The Commission is urging people to phone their library first to ascertain what services they are able to offer. Contact details for all Victorian libraries are available online at Victoria's Virtual Library www.libraries.vic.gov.au/librarylocator/

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