

**IN THE MATTER OF  
The Hazelwood Coal Mine Fire Inquiry**

**STATEMENT OF DR PAUL BRUCE SMITH**

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Filed on behalf of: The State of Victoria

Prepared by:

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Attention: Andrew Suddick

I, Dr Paul Bruce Smith, of level 3, 8 Nicholson Street, East Melbourne, Victoria, Deputy Secretary of Land, Fire and Environment in the Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (**DELWP**), can say as follows:

**Introduction**

1. I am the Deputy Secretary of Land, Fire and Environment in DELWP.
2. I have held this role since May 2012. My primary responsibilities include:
  - 2.1 leading a large multi-disciplined workforce, dealing in a complex and multi-stakeholder environment;
  - 2.2 embedding the organisations vision and strategy to create meaning for the divisional leadership team to deliver on corporate objectives;
  - 2.3 navigating the political context, building and maintaining relationships with a broad range of people, and proactively shaping relationships with Ministers, Agency Heads and key stakeholders;
  - 2.4 ensuring the highest ethical standards in the delivery of all of the department's objectives and that there is a strong commitment to the DELWP values;
  - 2.5 creating strong links to integrate corporate functions, frameworks and reporting processes;
  - 2.6 supporting joined up emergency management planning and response across the Victorian public sector;
  - 2.7 helping create liveable, inclusive and sustainable communities, by delivering corporate priorities to care for and protect our environment and respond to climate change, while supporting integrated action across the built environment, water, planning and local government portfolios;

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- 2.8 being a modern public service leader, driving the development of a mobile and flexible workforce and supporting a positive, safe working environment for employees;
  - 2.9 providing strong executive leadership and acting as the principal source; and
  - 2.10 ensuring safety is integral to our work by creating a culture of 'safety first', leading by example and ensuring compliance with OHS legislation.
3. My background is in the Victorian Public Service and I have the following academic qualifications:
    - 3.1 Bachelor of Social Science; and
    - 3.2 PhD in Environmental Policy.
  4. DELWP manages fire on 7.6 million hectares of public land, being about one third of the State of Victoria. In managing this land, an objective of DELWP is to reduce the risk, contain any outbreak and manage the environmental effects of fire. In meeting this objective DELWP works closely with Parks Victoria, the Environment Protection Authority (**EPA**), the Country Fire Authority (**CFA**) and other emergency agencies.
  5. DELWP has many offices located across Victoria with around 3,100 staff.
  6. The Land, Fire and Environment Group forms part of DELWP. It is one of six groups in DELWP.
  7. I report directly to Adam Fennessy, the Secretary of DELWP.
  8. DELWP's management role in relation to the majority of public land stems from the *Forests Act 1958* (**Forests Act**). That Act provides that the Secretary to DELWP (acting in its body corporate capacity) must carry out proper and sufficient work for the planned prevention of fire in State forests, national parks and protected public land.
  9. This statement has been prepared pursuant to the request made by the Hazelwood Mine Fire Inquiry Board (**Inquiry**) by letter of 30 June 2015.
  10. The Inquiry Board's letter requests that this witness statement addresses the following:
    - 10.1 provide a brief description of the Heath;
    - 10.2 provide a brief description of the impact on the Heath of the Ash Wednesday fires of 1983;
    - 10.3 explain the Department's role in the management of the Heath under the 'Anglesea Heath Management Plan' (2002) with particular reference to the mitigation and suppression of fire;
    - 10.4 explain the role of Alcoa of Australia Ltd (**Alcoa**) in the management of the Heath with particular reference to the mitigation and suppression of fire;

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- 10.5 what discussions there have been between the Department and Alcoa about the management of the Heath after the closure of the Anglesea coal mine on 31 August 2015;
- 10.6 what parts of the current mining area will be transferred to DELWP and when will this occur; and
- 10.7 what is the Department's view about the impact of the mine closure on the mitigation and suppression of fire in the Heath?
11. This statement addresses each of the above matters. In the heading to each section of this statement I indicate which paragraph in the Inquiry Board's letter of 30 June 2015 the section refers to.
12. The information contained in the body of this statement is derived from research carried out by officers of DELWP and Parks Victoria at my request in response to the Inquiry Board's letter and is accurate to the best of my knowledge, information and belief.

### **Question 1 - Provide a brief description of the Heath**

13. The Anglesea Heath (**Heath**) lies within the Barwon South West Region, in close proximity to the Great Otway National Park. Part of the ecological value of the Heath is in the fact it adjoins the Great Otway National Park and Otway Forest Park, and forms an area of largely intact and contiguous vegetation. Additionally, the Heath is one of the most native orchid rich sites in Australia with over 80 species found there.
14. Millions of years ago heathlands covered huge areas of Australia. The Heath is one of the remnants of natural vegetation in South Western Victoria that have escaped farming and urbanisation. While heathland communities exist in other areas of Australia, they are all in some sense unique. The Heath is different from any other Australian heathland. Nowhere else can we see the plant species that combine to form the vegetation communities found in this area.
15. The Heath is part of a larger area leased to Alcoa under the *Mines (Aluminium Agreement) Act 1961 (Vic) (M(AA) Act)*. Alcoa's mine lease area covers 7,145 hectares of land and approximately 6,495 hectares is the Heath. As the land is regulated by the M(AA) Act the land is not State forest, national park, or protected public land for the purposes of the *Forests Act*.
16. The Heath contains a high diversity of flora and fauna, including plant species considered rare or vulnerable in Victoria and plant species with disjunct populations. The Heath was assessed by the Australian Heritage Commission in 1992 as having the richest and most diverse vegetation community recorded in Victoria.
17. The Victorian Government has committed to incorporating the Heath into the Great Otway National Park. This is subject to the agreement of Alcoa and will also require legislative amendments to the M(AA) Act and the *National Parks Act 1975 (Vic) (National Parks Act)*.

**Question 2 - Provide a brief description of the impact on the Heath of the Ash Wednesday fires of 1983**

18. The Ash Wednesday fires in February 1983 were uncontrollable. The Otways Complex broke out at approximately 3pm at Deans Marsh and moved toward Lorne and continued to burn towards Aireys Inlet. Moving at extraordinary speed, the fire impacted Anglesea where houses were lost, but the main part of town was saved. The fire burnt on through the night toward Jan Juc and Torquay and was eventually contained near Bellbrae. It burnt the whole region including the entire Anglesea Heath.
19. Faunal impacts of the fire were studied from 1983 to 2004, and showed native species recovering in the seven years after the fire. Faunal abundance and diversity declined after this. It is believed this decline was due to decreased rainfall. The floral diversity of the Heath had returned to pre-bushfire levels approximately three to ten years after the fire. The general health of the Heath was largely responsible for its recovery, as it allowed repopulation from areas that were not severely impacted.
20. As part of a broader ecological monitoring regime associated with the Heath, DELWP continues to work in this area with its partners, such as Parks Victoria and local friends groups: ANGAIR and Friends of Eastern Otways.

**Question 3 - Explain the Department's role in the management of the Heath under the 'Anglesea Heath Management Plan' (2002) with particular reference to the mitigation and suppression of fire**

*Management of the Heath*

21. A Cooperative Land Management Agreement was signed on 8 November 2000 by the Secretary of the former Department of Natural Resources and Environment (NRE)<sup>1</sup> and Alcoa, to allow the Secretary and Alcoa to manage the Heath for conservation purposes.<sup>2</sup>
22. The Cooperative Land Management Agreement provides for the protection and preservation of the natural environment, including indigenous flora and fauna, and features of scenic, archaeological, geological, historic or other scientific interest.<sup>3</sup>
23. The Cooperative Land Management Agreement was entered into pursuant to s. 69 of the *Conservation Forests and Lands Act 1987*.<sup>4</sup>
24. The Anglesea Heath Management Plan<sup>5</sup> was developed to guide the strategic and 'day-to-day' management of the Heath in accordance with the overarching conservation objectives of the Cooperative Land Management Agreement. It was prepared by the Secretary of the former NRE, Parks Victoria and Alcoa, with input from stakeholders including Anglesea Aireys Inlet Society for the Protection of Flora and Fauna, Geelong Environment Council, Deakin University and the Surf Coast Shire.

<sup>1</sup> Now the Secretary to DELWP, being the body corporate created by s.6 of the CFL Act.

<sup>2</sup> Agreement between the Secretary of the Department of NRE and Alcoa of Australia Limited (2000), land for conversation shown on the Plan in Schedule B.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, paragraph 2.

<sup>4</sup> Alcoa are treated as the landowner of the Heath for the purpose of the Cooperative Land Management Agreement, stemming from the nature of the leasehold right Alcoa has over the Heath pursuant to the M(AA) Act.

<sup>5</sup> [http://parkweb.vic.gov.au/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/313277/plan-Anglesea-Heath.pdf](http://parkweb.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0005/313277/plan-Anglesea-Heath.pdf).

25. The primary focus of the management regime is to manage the Heath for its various conservation values in a manner that is consistent with the surrounding Great Otway National Park. This includes managing it for fire risk.
26. The Anglesea Heath Management Plan contains seven key management areas:
- Biodiversity conservation;
  - Protection of natural values;
  - Impact management;
  - Cultural resource management;
  - Recreation and tourism management;
  - Interpretation and information; and
  - Community participation and involvement.
27. Each key management area contains sub-plans, which focus on the management of specific elements of the Heath and its recreational use. Sub-plan D.5.4 focuses on fire management, and the actions associated with this key area are detailed below.<sup>6</sup>

**Anglesea Heath Management Plan, Sub-Plan, D.5.4 Fire Management**

**“Actions – Major actions to be undertaken for this key area are to:**

- provide interpretative material regarding fire safety and management
- prohibit open fires and fuel stoves in Anglesea Heath
- patrol sites of highest visitor use, particularly in periods of high fire danger
- enforce fire regulations and restrictions on the use of fire within Anglesea Heath
- use, where possible, the following least disturbance strategies for wildfire suppression in Anglesea Heath (in accordance with the *Code of Practice for Bushfire Management on Public Land*):
  - fireline construction using hand crews
  - air attack to drop fire retardant, water and foam
  - back burning from existing roads and tracks
  - using existing roads and tracks or topographic features as control lines
  - where possible avoid the use of bulldozers within the heritage area
  - where possible, avoid the use of bulldozers in areas infected with Cinnamon Fungus
- undertake washdowns and other available measures to prevent the introduction and/or spread of pest plants and Cinnamon Fungus during prescribed burning activities
- close and revegetate any new control lines after fire in accordance with the *Code of Practice for Bushfire Management on Public Land*

<sup>6</sup> Anglesea Heath Management Plan November 2002, page 33.

- develop an Anglesea area ecological burn strategy.”

**Fire Management for the Heath**

28. The Heath is, and will continue to be managed for the 2015/16 summer season, by DELWP and Parks Victoria as though it forms part of the adjoining Great Otway National Park. This approach is a practical response to the physical proximity of the Heath to the national park and means that bushfire management at the Heath will continue to be consistent with arrangements for the national park. These arrangements include those documented in the Management Agreement 2013 between DELWP and Parks Victoria,<sup>7</sup> the Great Otway National Parks Management Plan, the Anglesea Heath Management Plan and the Barwon Otway Plan.
29. The Heath, as a large area of forest and heath capable of holding a heavy fuel load, is vulnerable to bushfires. Given the Cooperative Land Management Agreement, and due to the bushfire risk associated with the Heath, the Heath is managed by DELWP and Parks Victoria in a fully integrated manner as part of the broader bushfire management program in DELWP’s Barwon South West Region.
30. Bushfire management planning for public land in Victoria occurs at State, regional and local levels, as seen in Figure 1.

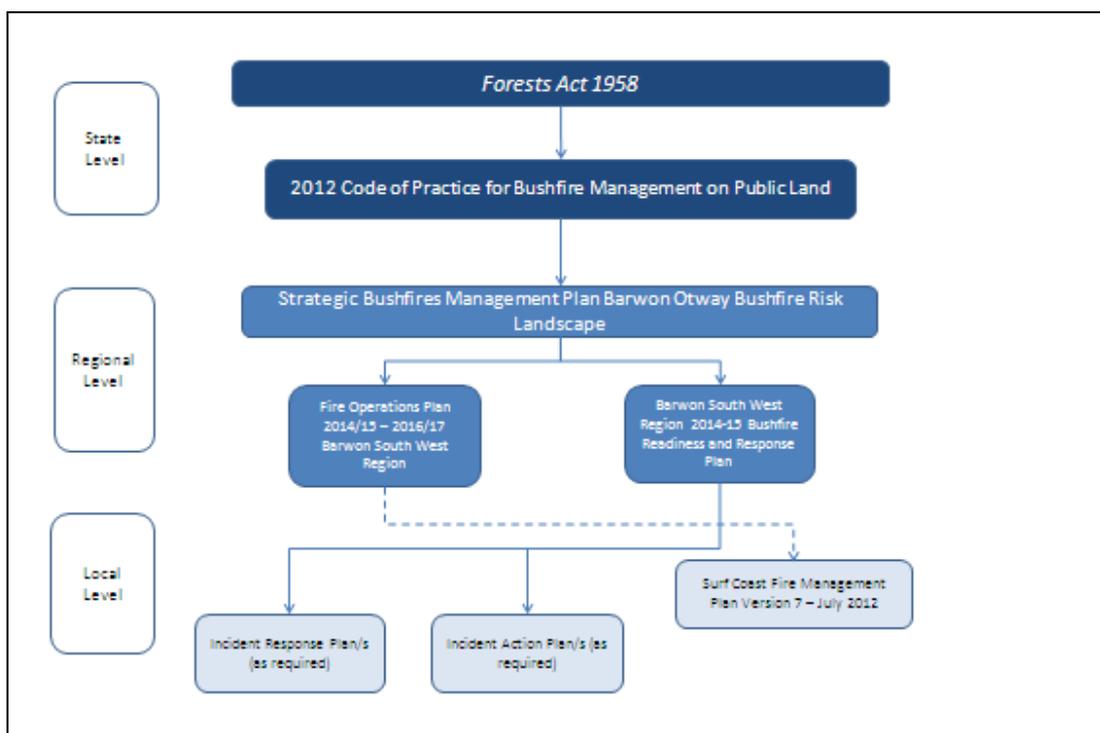


Figure 1: Bushfire management planning for public land in Victoria at the State, regional and local level

31. A series of regional level plans are in place to address bushfire management in DELWP’s Barwon South West Region, including:

<sup>7</sup> DELWP, along with Parks Victoria, manage more than seven million hectares of public land across Victoria, carrying out fire prevention activities on this land to help reduce the impacts of bushfires to communities and the environment.

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- a strategic bushfire management plan (for the) Barwon Otway Bushfire Risk Landscape (**Barwon Otway Plan**);
  - Barwon South West Readiness and Response Plan (which is updated annually); and
  - Fire Operations Plan Barwon South West Region (which is updated annually).
32. These plans inform local level planning and resource allocation within DELWP's Barwon South West Region, and guide DELWP and Parks Victoria, as the managers of relevant public land, in undertaking coordinated prevention, fuel management, preparedness, and response and recovery actions on relevant public land to reduce bushfire risk and promote ecosystem resilience.

#### *Barwon Otway Plan*

33. For strategic bushfire management planning purposes, Victoria is broken up into seven bushfire risk landscapes. Strategic bushfire management plans are developed for each bushfire risk landscape to guide the implementation of bushfire mitigation strategies.
34. A 'bushfire risk landscape' is an area where bushfire behaviour is sufficiently common to treat the area as a whole; such as the types of places bushfires can start, the terrain and vegetation that they could spread in and the types of impacts that could occur. The risk landscape that encompasses the Heath is the Barwon Otway Bushfire Risk Landscape, which is wholly located within the Otway District of DELWP's Barwon South West Region.
35. The Barwon Otway Bushfire Risk Landscape covers 1,065,300 hectares, which is five per cent of the State's area.<sup>8</sup> Of this, 4.6 per cent of the landscape is public land managed by DELWP (48,500 hectares) and 13.5 per cent is public land managed by Parks Victoria (143,900 hectares).<sup>9</sup>
36. The Barwon Otway Plan outlines the fuel management strategy, and other actions, that will be undertaken by DELWP and Parks Victoria to minimise the impact of major bushfires on people, property, infrastructure and economic activity within the region. The Barwon Otway Plan guides DELWP and Parks Victoria on the coordinated implementation of works to comply with the *Code of Practice for Bushfire Management on Public Land*, which is the State's key governing document for bushfire management on public land in Victoria.
37. The Barwon Otway Plan aims to reduce the impact of bushfires on communities (such as Anglesea, Aireys Inlet and Lorne), infrastructure and high-value ecosystem areas. This is achieved by managing fuel loads to reduce fire spread and intensity. Strategic fire management planning involves conducting detailed likelihood and consequence risk assessments across the landscape. These risk assessments are used to target locations where fuel management activities will contribute to mitigating the spread and intensity of fires. Fuel management activities are conducted:

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<sup>8</sup> Strategic Bushfire Management Plan – Barwon Otway Bushfires Risk Landscape 2014, page 10.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

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- in areas where bushfires are likely to start, to prevent or limit ignition;
  - along the paths that bushfires are likely to spread, to reduce their rate of spread, intensity and long-distance spotting potential; and
  - close to high-priority assets, to reduce the intensity and short-distance spotting potential of bushfires.
38. DELWP's Otway's District, with the support of Parks Victoria and a strong relationship with the CFA, leads the delivery of fire management programs within the Barwon South West Region. The management of fire risk across the emergency management spectrum, is best described as strategies and actions for prevention, preparedness, fuel management, response and recovery.

### ***Prevention***

39. Preventing fires from igniting and spreading on public land lowers the risk of fires impacting on communities and the environment. DELWP and Parks Victoria carry out numerous coordinated activities to prevent fires from igniting on public land.
40. DELWP and Parks Victoria engage with communities to educate people on fire risk and promote shared responsibility and risk management.
41. Officers from DELWP and Parks Victoria also patrol campsites on severe fire weather days, and on days leading up to severe fire weather conditions. These officers inspect campsites to ensure compliance with relevant regulations and issue fines for non-compliance, enforce total fire ban days, and engage with campers about fire danger.

### ***Preparedness***

42. Preparedness activities play an important role in managing emergencies. Preparedness activities, including scenario planning, ensure response activities can occur quickly, efficiently and effectively in response to emerging threats.
43. As outlined in the *Code of Practice for Bushfire Management on Public Land*, DELWP through its preparedness activities and risk analysis aims to achieve the following outcomes:
- effective and appropriate allocation of staff capabilities and resources for bushfire management;
  - effective and appropriate allocation of non-staff capabilities (including equipment, plant and vehicles) and resources for bushfire management; and
  - improved interoperability with other fire and emergency management agencies.
44. These outcomes are achieved through the following strategies:
- develop and maintain staff capabilities, resources and readiness for bushfire response according to existing and forecast bushfire risk;

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- develop and maintain non-staff capabilities, resources and readiness for bushfire response according to existing and forecast bushfire risk;
- develop and implement robust and functional fire danger and risk analysis products and systems, which describe existing and forecast bushfire risk across Victoria at daily, weekly and seasonal levels; and
- develop strategies and joint partnership arrangements that assist interagency interoperability.

#### *Fire Lookouts*

45. DELWP and Parks Victoria's preparedness for bushfire risk in the Barwon South West Region is increased through the use of manned fire lookout towers and air observer flights, which occur during the summer season on high fire danger days. These observation points allow for quick identification of recent bushfire ignitions, and expeditious response activities to occur.
46. There are eight fire lookouts located in the Barwon South West Region. Fire lookouts are equipped with radios, telephones, high powered binoculars and map tables, with sight bearings for major features marked out. The lookout at Peters Hill overlooks the Anglesea Heath, with additional coverage from the Mount Cowley fire lookout and the CFA tower at Mount Duneed.

#### *Resourcing for the Barwon South West Region*

47. The Barwon South West Response Plan also outlines the resources, both personnel and equipment, that will be available for fire response in the Barwon South West Region for the 2015/16 summer season. Should an incident within the region be of such a magnitude as to escalate coordination to the State level, additional resources will be made available for response activities.
48. DELWP and Parks Victoria employ a permanent firefighting workforce. During summer seasons this workforce is supplemented with an annual recruitment of Project Fire Fighters. There will be 80 seasonal firefighters recruited by DELWP for the Barwon South West Region for the 2015/16 summer season.
49. Parks Victoria is finalising its seasonal recruitment plan for the 2015/16 summer season. Recruitment is anticipated to match recruitment for the 2014/15 summer season, when 10 seasonal staff were employed to assist with patrolling and fire response on the Heath.

#### *Fuel Management*

50. Managing fuel loads on public land is an important part of DELWP and Parks Victoria's fire prevention activities.
51. The likelihood of a fire igniting and spreading is impacted by a range of factors, including the terrain and vegetation within a landscape. Fuel management of the landscape reduces the amount of vegetation a fire could consume and includes planned burning and mechanical fuel reduction activities, such as slashing and mowing, to remove undergrowth and tree canopies.

52. DELWP and Parks Victoria undertake a range of coordinated fuel management activities to reduce fuel loads, including decreasing the quantity of leaf litter, twigs, bark and undergrowth. This is carried out by planned burning and mechanical methods, such as mulching, applying herbicide, mowing and slashing.
53. Planned burning, the deliberate introduction of fire into the landscape to reduce the fuel load, is an effective method to manage fuels in large areas of public lands. It is the main mechanism used by DELWP and Parks Victoria to reduce bushfire risk under the Barwon Otway Plan. Planned burns also play a role in ecological management and forest regeneration. Although planned burning cannot eliminate the risk of bushfires, it reduces fuel loads and can increase the effectiveness of fire suppression activities, which decreases the likelihood of fires igniting and spreading.
54. Approximately 180,000 hectares, or 17 per cent of the total landscape, of the Barwon Otway Risk Landscape is treatable by planned burning, comprising of 42 per cent of public land and 10 per cent of private land.<sup>10</sup> The remaining land is not treatable by planned burning because the vegetation cannot readily be treated by fire under controlled conditions (such as wet forest), or the land is sensitive to fire, is physically too difficult to burn or is occupied by infrastructure or private homes.
55. In the past 10 years, 11.3 per cent of the public land and 0.1 per cent of the private land has been burnt through planned burning in the Barwon Otway Bushfire Risk Landscape. The planned burning targets for 2015/16 have been set at 9,000 hectares for the Barwon Otway Bushfire Risk Landscape, which is approximately five per cent of public land.
56. Implementation of the Barwon Otway Plan has significantly reduced the risk of bushfires to communities in the region.

*Fire Operations - Barwon South West Region*

57. Specific fuel reduction activities are regulated by a Fire Operations Plan (**FOP**), a regional plan updated annually, which details the fuel reduction activities to be completed for the following three years. The current Barwon South West Region FOP sets out the fuel reduction activities for 2014/15 to 2016/17.
58. The Barwon South West Region FOP details the fire prevention and preparedness works to be delivered in this region for the period 2014/15 to 2016/17. A FOP is not a static document and may change as a result of bushfire risk analysis.
59. The Barwon South West Region FOP is prepared by DELWP, and shaped by feedback and knowledge from local communities and key stakeholders such as the CFA, local councils, forest managers and flora and fauna specialists as well as key industries.
60. The Barwon South West Region FOP identifies three types of fuel reduction activities, which have been and will continue to be undertaken over the three-year cycle:

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid, page 28.

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- **Planned burns:** controlled application of fire during periods of lower fire risk to achieve one of three main purposes – fuel reduction, ecological management and forest regeneration.
- **Works program:** activities required to support the planned burning program, such as the maintenance and construction of fire control lines, fuel breaks, fire infrastructure and other fuel management activities. This includes mechanical slashing to reduce fuel loads.
- **Strategic fuel breaks:** establishing and maintaining a network of strategic fuel breaks, which are strips of land where vegetation has been modified to reduce the amount of fuel available to burn during bushfires.

### *Response*

61. DELWP, Parks Victoria and the CFA undertake extensive response activities during bushfires. Response activities include any action aimed at suppressing an ignited fire, such as water or foam dropping via a helicopter or fixed-wing aircraft and direct or indirect attack by ground personnel.
62. Across the State, as in the Barwon South West Region, response to fires is in accordance with the State strategic control priorities which are set by the Emergency Management Commissioner.
63. The Barwon South West Region produces an annual Barwon South West Response Plan, which defines the readiness, initial attack and firefighting procedures, to be adopted by DELWP and Parks Victoria in the Barwon South West Fire Region for each upcoming bushfire season.
64. The Barwon South West Response Plan allows for effective, efficient and consistent response activities across each locality within the region.
65. The Barwon South West Response Plan mandates readiness arrangements and aviation capability during days and periods of elevated forest and grass fire danger index. This aims to ensure that initial attacks of emerging fires can be swift and targeted to minimise the spread of fires.
66. Management of a fire affecting the Heath will be coordinated from the Geelong Incident Control Centre, in accordance with the Command and Control arrangements for the Barwon South West Region.<sup>11</sup> The CFA and DELWP operations will be integrated for any fire affecting the Heath.
67. Initial attack fire response on the Heath will be coordinated under the Barwon South West Response Plan until such a time as an Incident Action Plan is put in place by the Chief Fire Officer. Initial attack resources will be deployed from DELWPs Anglesea depot and CFA resources from the Anglesea fire station.

### *Recovery*

68. Recovery programs and activities play several important roles following bushfires, including regenerating ecological environments and mitigation against future fires.

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<sup>11</sup> Barwon South West DELWP/CFA Local Mutual Aid Plan 2014/2015 Fire Season.

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69. Recovery planning for the Barwon South West Region incorporates recovery planning for the Heath. Recovery plans are developed through the Regional Emergency Management Team, and the Surf Coast Shire Municipal Emergency Management Planning Committee.

***-Question 4 - Explain the role of Alcoa of Australia Ltd ('Alcoa') in the management of the Heath with particular reference to the mitigation and suppression of fire.***

70. The Heath is currently, and following its anticipated incorporation into the Great Otway National Park, will continue to be managed by DELWP and Parks Victoria. DELWP undertakes its fire management role of the Heath in the knowledge that Alcoa and the CFA have complimentary fire management plans that have been developed to respond to fire in the mine area.

***Question 5 - What discussions have there been between the Department and Alcoa about the management of the Heath after the closure of the Anglesea mine on 31 August 2015?***

71. Discussions between DELWP and Alcoa have reinforced the commitment by both parties to the continued management arrangements described by the Cooperative Land Management Agreement during the rehabilitation and closure planning process.
72. The Victorian Government has committed to incorporating the Anglesea Heath into the adjacent Great Otway National Park.
73. The Government is keen to see as much heathland incorporated as soon as possible. DELWP is undertaking preliminary work around land titles and boundary surveys to progress this.

***Question 6 - What parts of the current mining area will be transferred to DELWP and when will this occur?***

74. The Victorian Government is engaging in a coordinated response to the shut down and long term rehabilitation of the Anglesea coal mine, through the Alcoa Anglesea Coordination Group, chaired by the Department of Economic Development, Jobs, Resources and Transport. This Group is not time limited as the remediation of the Anglesea coal mine and power station will take several years to complete. DELWP is a member of the Alcoa Anglesea Coordination Group.
75. DELWP is also facilitating a public engagement process with the local community, stakeholders, land holders and Council.
76. DELWP and Alcoa, through continued engagement, will determine what parts of the current mining area may be transferred to DELWP.

***Question 7 - What is the Department's view about the impact of the mine closure on the mitigation and suppression of fire in the Heath?***

77. Alcoa remains responsible for the fire risk in the mine. DELWP and Parks Victoria continue to manage the Heath in the broader context of fire management in the Barwon South West Region and long standing fire management arrangements.
78. The Heath is currently, and following its anticipated incorporation into the Great Otway National Park, will continue to be managed by DELWP and Parks Victoria.

79. DELWP will work with Emergency Management Victoria to ensure rehabilitation of the mine site is taken into account into future fire operations planning.

Dated: July 2015

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**DR PAUL BRUCE SMITH**