

Overview of Fuel Management Report 2013–14

The Department of Environment and Primary Industries (DEPI) and its partners manage more than seven million hectares of public land on behalf of all Victorians. DEPI works jointly with Parks Victoria, Melbourne Water, VicForests, emergency management organisations and Victorian communities to actively reduce the risk of bushfires, and to safeguard the things people care most about in the areas where they live.

Fuel management is one of the most effective ways of reducing bushfire risk as it reduces the amount of the fuel in the landscape. The amount of fuel plays an important role in the rate of spread of bushfires if they do occur and the effectiveness of response activities. Since 2011, fuel has been reduced across 619,000 hectares of public land through fuel management activities and bushfire events. Over 2012-13, DEPI treated 275,192ha out of a target of 250,000ha (110 percent). Over 2013-14, DEPI treated 147,043ha out of a target of 260,000ha (57 percent). The delivery of the 2013-14 fuel management program was impacted by poor weather, particularly over autumn when the bulk of the program is usually delivered. The hot and dry summer conditions and a long and active fire season were followed by a wet autumn across much of the state. DEPI and its partners aim to treat 275,000ha of public land over 2014-15 season.

Under a risk-based approach to bushfire management, specialist bushfire risk landscape teams across Victoria are:

- pairing the best available science with local knowledge and world-leading technology to model how bushfires behave
- working with communities, industries and other stakeholders to understand what they value and want to protect from bushfires
- identifying the most effective options to reduce bushfire risk
- monitoring, evaluating and reporting how bushfire risk is being reduced.

By partnering science and technology, we are planning the smartest and most effective ways to reduce the risk of bushfires - including when, where and how to undertake planned burning - to get the best from our investment. This means that communities are more involved in decisions about managing bushfire risk, and have better information to guide their own decision making.



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This is a year-on-year comparison of some of DEPI's key indicators contained in the Report:

Metric	Performance comparison		Comments
	2012-13	2013-14	
Hectares treated (DEPI's annual fuel management target)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – DEPI accounted for 147,043ha in 2013-14 out of a target of 260,000ha (57 percent). In 2012-13, DEPI accounted for 275,192ha out of a target of 250,000ha (110 percent) – This was due to a long, hot, dry summer and a cold, wet winter which limited safe conditions for burning.
Preparation & planning (Key lead indicators for DEPI's fuel management program)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – DEPI achieved 206 percent out of a target of 165 percent of burn plans completed for 2013-14. – DEPI achieved 172 percent out of a target of 140 percent of sites prepared for planned burning.
Residual risk (Current metric used to measure risk in the landscape)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Residual risk increased by around three percent across the state from around 60 percent to around 62 percent.
Tolerable fire interval (One of the metrics used to measure ecosystem resilience)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The overall percentage of land below minimum tolerable fire interval remained the same (around 50 percent).
Vegetation growth stages (One of the metrics used to measure ecosystem resilience)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The overall percentage of land in adulthood growth stage increased by four percent to 27 percent.
Community engagement (Community engagement as part of fuel management planning process)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The change in performance reflected a shift in focus towards strategic bushfire engagement and away from simply operational engagement.
Monitoring activities (Monitoring activities for risk and biodiversity assessment)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – There has been a shift in focus to a more strategic statewide approach as part of the development of a bushfire monitoring, evaluation and reporting framework (due for completion Nov 2014).
Total output costs (Fund allocated as part of fuel management program)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – As with previous year, DEPI is continuing to develop a costing system and improving its ability to report more accurately on operational costs associated with planned burning.

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Printed by Impact Digital, Brunswick

ISBN 978-1-74146-297-5 (Print)

ISBN 978-1-74146-298-2 (pdf)

Accessibility

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