



Strategic Fuel breaks – Inform Sheet

April 2007

Background

Much of Australia including Victoria is in the grip of a prolonged dry period. Climate scientists are predicting dry conditions to persist, potentially worsen and lead to more frequent and intense natural events such as wildfires. Rainfall totals in 2007 would need to be significantly above average to significantly reduce the potential for a severe fire season in 2007/2008. Climatic forecasts are for average to slightly above average rainfall for 2007.

Otway Parks and Reserves total approximately 150,000 ha. Whilst 150,000 ha is a large area, the Parks and Reserves are remnants. The potential for a wildfire to burn, in a single event, a large proportion of the Otways is a real possibility under the drought conditions, which are persisting. Such an outcome would be detrimental to fauna and flora in the Otways.

Since late 2006 we have been planning and implementing enhanced fire protection works in the Otways. Works have included Asset Protection Zones and Strategic Fuel Break Networks. Planning of Strategic Wildfire Moderation Zones has also been undertaken and implementation is scheduled for autumn 2007.

Strategic Wildfire Moderation Zones

The map on the reverse side identifies areas that are proposed to be prescribed burnt in autumn 2007, subject to suitable conditions.

Purpose:

To reduce the potential for the development of landscape scale fires and their environmental, social and economic impacts.

Objective:

The objectives are to provide a strategic corridor of sufficient width and continuity to achieve a substantial barrier to the spread of wildfire by reducing its speed, intensity and potential for spot fire development. To reduce damage caused by wildfire, and to create areas, which assist in making fire suppression safer and more effective.

Treatment intensity:

The aim is to reduce overall fuel hazard to low over 80% of the area.

Proposed burn frequency:

Strategic Wildfire Moderation Zones will be selected on the basis of both effectiveness and ecological requirements. The area shown on the map on the reverse side will only be retreated by prescribed burning when it is ecologically appropriate to do so.

Environmental assessment:

A rigorous environmental assessment has been undertaken. This assessment has cleared the area for prescribed burning. The prescribed burning is consistent with the principles detailed in the Guidelines And Procedures For Ecological Burning On Public Land In Victoria (DSE, 2004)

Project Information

Please contact George O'Dwyer on 5233 5568 for all information about the Otway Fire Protection Enhancement Project.

Otway Fire Protection Enhancement Project Strategic Burns

