

APPENDIX C – FIRE IN VICTORIA: A SUMMARY

This appendix summarises the major fire events in Victoria from February 1851 to February 2007.¹

Date	Location	Impact Summary
6 February 1851 (Black Thursday)	Wimmera, Portland, Gippsland, Plenty Ranges, Westernport, Dandenong district, Heidelberg	Deaths: 15 ² People rendered homeless: 100 Buildings: 1,300 Livestock: 1 million sheep, thousands of cattle Area burnt: 5 million hectares (approx. 25%) of Victoria ³
4 and 5 January 1886	Otway and Heytesbury, incorporating Panmure, Colac, Camperdown	Deaths: nil Estimated damage: £15,000 ⁴ Buildings: approx. 50 ⁵ Fencing: thousands of miles (over 5,000 chains) ⁶
1 February 1898 (Red Tuesday)	South Gippsland	Deaths: 12 People rendered homeless: 2,500 Buildings: over 2,000 Area burnt: 260,000 hectares
December 1899	Beechworth–Yackandandah, Broadford, Bairnsdale	Deaths: nil Estimated damage: £50,000 Buildings: many homesteads Livestock: extensive losses ⁷
January 1900	Hamilton, Bealiba, Warrenbayne, Wangaratta, Euroa, Warrnambool	Deaths: nil Estimated damage: £100,000–200,000 Buildings: 6 woolsheds and a number of homes Fencing: extensive losses Livestock: 20,000 sheep, 300 cattle and a number of horses Area burnt: more than 500,000 acres ⁸
February 1900	Meredith, Warrnambool, Pyrenees Range, Gippsland	Deaths: 3 Estimated damage: £35,000 Buildings: homes, farmhouses and farm buildings Fencing: hundreds of miles Livestock: cattle and sheep Area burnt: in excess of 60,000 acres ⁹
December 1905 – January 1906	Dandenong Ranges	Deaths: 12
1 January 1912	Willaura	Deaths: nil Buildings: 15 Area burnt: main street of the town
1 January 1913	Chelsea (Melbourne)	Deaths: nil Buildings: 64 permanent residences and 100 holiday homes
1914	Gippsland, Grampians, Otway Range	Deaths: nil Area burnt: varied – 100,000 hectares ¹⁰
1926	Noojee, Kinglake, Warburton, Erica, Dandenong Ranges	Deaths: 60 People rendered homeless: 700 Buildings: 1,000 Area burnt: 400,000 hectares
1932	Gippsland and other areas across Victoria	Deaths: 9 Area burnt: large areas of state forest
8 January 1939	Narbethong	Deaths: 2

Date	Location	Impact Summary
13–20 January 1939 (incl. Black Friday)	Large areas of the north-east and Gippsland, the Otway and Grampian Ranges and the towns of Rubicon, Woods Point, Warrandyte, Noojee, Omeo, Mansfield, Dromana, Yarra Glen, Warburton, Erica	Deaths: 71 People rendered homeless: 3,000 Buildings: 1,300 (including 69 sawmills) Livestock: 2,500 Area burnt: 1.5–2.0 million hectares
3–4 March 1942	Hamilton, South Gippsland	Deaths: 1 Livestock: 100 sheep ¹ Buildings: 30
22 December 1943 – 15 February 1944	Central and western districts, Morwell, Yallourn	Deaths: 51 (including 10 at Wangaratta on 22 December) Livestock: 10,000 Buildings: more than 500 (as well as an open-cut mine) ¹² Area burnt: more than 1 million hectares of grassland and 160,000 hectares of forest ¹³
1 January 1952 – 1 March 1952	Central and southern districts, including Benalla area	Deaths: 10 Livestock: 7,500 Area burnt: 1.5 million acres
14–17 January 1962	The Basin, Christmas Hills, Kinglake, St Andrews, Hurstbridge, Warrandyte, Mitcham	Deaths: 32 Buildings: 454
January – February 1962	Southern district	Deaths: 1 People rendered homeless: 2,500 Buildings: 150
17 January 1965	Longwood	Deaths: 7 (all in one family) Buildings: 6 houses
15 February – 13 March 1965	Gippsland	Deaths: 3 Buildings: more than 60 homes and shops Livestock: more than 4,000 Area burnt: 750,000 acres of forest, 40,000 acres of grassland ¹⁴
19 February 1968	Dandenong Ranges, The Basin, Upwey	Deaths: nil People rendered homeless: 200 Buildings: 64 ¹⁵ Area burnt: 1,920 hectares
8–9 January 1969	Lara, Daylesford, Bulgana, Yea, Darraweit, Kangaroo Flat, Korongvale	Deaths: 23 People rendered homeless: 800 Buildings: 251 Livestock: more than 12,000 Area burnt: 250,000 hectares
December 1972	Mt Buffalo	Deaths: nil Area burnt: 12,140 hectares ¹⁶
12 February 1977 (Black Saturday)	Penshurst, Tatyoon, Streatham, Creswick, Pura Pura, Werneth, Cressy, Rokewood, Beeac, Mingay, Lismore, Little River	Deaths: 8 People rendered homeless: 350 Buildings: 456 Fencing: 10,000 kilometres ¹⁷ Livestock: 250,000 sheep; 4,500 cattle ¹⁸ Area burnt: over 135,000 hectares ¹⁹
15 January 1978	Bairnsdale	Deaths: 2 People rendered homeless: 80 Buildings: 36 Livestock: 6,500 ²⁰
28 December 1980 – 6 January 1981	Sunset Country and Big Desert	Deaths: nil Area burnt: 119,000 hectares ²¹

Date	Location	Impact Summary
8–9 January 1983	Greendale	Deaths: 2 Forest Commission employees ²²
31 January – 12 February 1983	Cann River	Deaths: nil Area burnt: 120,000 hectares
1 February 1983	Mt Macedon	Deaths: nil Buildings: 50 houses Area burnt: 6,100 hectares (including 1,864 hectares of state forest)
16–18 February 1983 (Ash Wednesday)	Monivae, Branxholme, Cockatoo, East Trentham, Mt Macedon, Otway Range, Belgrave Heights, Warburton, Cudjee, Upper Beaconsfield, Framingham	Deaths: 47 People rendered homeless: 9,000 Buildings: 2,500 Livestock: 32,750 (including 18,000 sheep and 7,000 cattle) Fencing: 5,900 kilometres Area burnt: 210,000 hectares Estimated damage: \$190 million ²³
4–12 March 1983	Cann River	Deaths: nil Area burnt: 140,000 hectares
14 January – 15 February 1985	Including Maryborough, Avoca, Little River, Wilsons Promontory	Deaths: 5 People rendered homeless: 600 Buildings: 680 Livestock: 46,000 Area burnt: 50,800 hectares
27 December 1990 – 10 January 1991	Strathbogie Ranges	Deaths: 1 People rendered homeless: 30 Buildings: 166 Livestock: 13,500
23 February 1995	Berringa	Deaths: nil Area burnt: 10,000 hectares (mostly forest) ²⁴
1 October 1995	South-western districts	Deaths: nil Area burnt: bushland and a pine forest
19–21 January 1997	Dandenong Ranges, Creswick, Heathcote, Teddywaddy, Goughs Bay	Deaths: 3 People rendered homeless: 150 Buildings: 43 and 1 CFA fire truck Area burnt: 4,150 hectares
16 February 1997	Winton, Romsey	Deaths: nil Livestock: 200 sheep Area burnt: 800 hectares
31 December 1997 – 12 January 1998	Caledonia River area of Alpine National Park, Carey River State Forest	Deaths: nil Area burnt: 32,000 hectares
1 February 1998	Western District	Deaths: nil Buildings: 60 Livestock: some losses Area burnt: more than 1,600 hectares
22 March 1998	Trentham	Deaths: nil Buildings: 60 Area burnt: 3,500 hectares
2 December 1998	Linton	Deaths: 5 (CFA firefighters) Area burnt: 780 hectares ²⁵
5–9 January 1999	Grampians	Deaths: nil Area burnt: 7,000 hectares ²⁶
18–21 January 2000	Portland region	Deaths: nil Area burnt: 1,700 hectares

Date	Location	Impact Summary
10 February 2000	North-western Victoria	Deaths: nil Buildings: 5 Area burnt: 115 hectares
28 November – 20 December 2000	Dadswells Bridge and surrounds, Horsham, Stawell, Barratt region	Deaths: nil Buildings: 6 Livestock: 8,000 (mainly sheep) ²⁷ Fencing: 500 kilometres ²⁸ Area burnt: 29,000 hectares ²⁹
March 2002	Glenaroua	Deaths: nil Buildings: 1 house Area burnt: 6,100 hectares of grass and scrub ³⁰
17–31 December 2002	Big Desert	Deaths: nil Buildings: 1 abandoned house Area burnt: 181,400 hectares ³¹
8 January – 7 March 2003	North-eastern Victoria, Gippsland	Deaths: 1 Buildings: 41 houses Fencing: 3,000 kilometres Livestock: 110,000 Area burnt: 1.3 million hectares
April 2005	Wilson's Promontory	Deaths: nil Area burnt: more than 6,000 hectares ³²
31 December 2005 – 31 January 2006	Ararat, Baw Baw Shire, Glenelg Shire, Golden Plains Shire, Greater Geelong, Horsham, Latrobe, Moorabool Shire, Moyne Shire, Murrindindi Shire, Northern Grampians Shire, South Gippsland Shire, Southern Grampians Shire	Deaths: 4 Buildings: 416 Fencing: 2,654 kilometres Livestock: 64,265 Area burnt: 160,000 hectares
1 December 2006 – 7 February 2007	Alpine Shire, Benalla, Indigo Shire, Mansfield Shire, Corangamite Shire, Golden Plains Shire, Baw Baw Shire, East Gippsland, Latrobe, Wellington Shire, Moyne Shire, Wangaratta	Deaths: 1 Buildings: 51 houses Livestock: 1,741 Area burnt: more than 1.2 million hectares

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- 1 Unless otherwise indicated all statistics in this appendix are drawn from Exhibit 726 – Emergency Management Australia Disasters Database. See all at RSCH.041.001.0002
 - 2 All other sources refer to 12 deaths—Exhibit 720 – Report of the Inquiry Into The 2002-2003 Victorian Bushfires (INF.018.002.0001) at 0047; Exhibit 726 – Inquiry into the Impact of Public Land Management Practices on Bushfires in Victoria (RSCH.016.001.0204) at 0259; National Inquiry on Bushfire Mitigation and Management (RSCH.004.003.1961) at 2338
 - 3 Exhibit 726 – Inquiry into the Impact of Public Land Management Practices on Bushfires in Victoria (RSCH.016.001.0204) at 0259
 - 4 Exhibit 726 – The Argus 1 February 1886 (RSCH.016.001.0001)
 - 5 Exhibit 726 – Report of Distribution of Forest Fires Relief Fund 1886 (RSCH.003.003.3143)
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 - 7 All data for this fire comes from Exhibit 726 – Eleventh Progress Report of the Royal Commission on State Forests and Timber Reserves (RSCH.003.002.8789) at 8804
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 - 12 Exhibit 726 – National Inquiry on Bushfire Mitigation and Management (RSCH.004.003.1961) at 2338
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 - 15 Exhibit 726 – National Inquiry on Bushfire Mitigation and Management (RSCH.004.003.1961) at 2338
 - 16 Exhibit 726 – National Inquiry on Bushfire Mitigation and Management (RSCH.004.003.1961) at 2339
 - 17 Exhibit 726 – Report of the Board of Inquiry into the Occurrence of Bush and Grass Fires in Victoria (RSCH.003.002.8822) at 8841
 - 18 Exhibit 726 – Report of the Board of Inquiry into the Occurrence of Bush and Grass Fires in Victoria (RSCH.003.002.8822) at 8841
 - 19 Exhibit 726 – Report of the Board of Inquiry into the Occurrence of Bush and Grass Fires in Victoria (RSCH.003.002.8822) at 8841
 - 20 Exhibit 726 – Inquiry into the Impact of Public Land Management Practices on Bushfires in Victoria (RSCH.016.001.0204) at 0260
 - 21 Exhibit 726 – Inquiry into the Impact of Public Land Management Practices on Bushfires in Victoria (RSCH.016.001.0204) at 0260
 - 22 Exhibit 726 – Legislative Assembly Ministerial Statement 16 March 1983 Pages 3072–3087 (RSCH.003.003.0364) at 0367
 - 23 Exhibit 726 – Legislative Assembly Ministerial Statement 16 March 1983 Pages 3072–3087 (RSCH.003.003.0364) at 0368
 - 24 Exhibit 726 – National Inquiry on Bushfire Mitigation and Management (RSCH.004.003.1961) at 2339
 - 25 All data for this fire come from Exhibit 720 – Report of the Inquiry Into The 2002-2003 Victorian Bushfires (INF.018.002.0001) at 0048
 - 26 Exhibit 726 – Mt. Difficult Fire – Grampians National Park 1989 (RSCH.030.001.0397) at 0399
 - 27 Exhibit 726 – Inquiry into the Impact of Public Land Management Practices on Bushfires in Victoria (RSCH.016.001.0204) at 0260
 - 28 Exhibit 726 – Inquiry into the Impact of Public Land Management Practices on Bushfires in Victoria (RSCH.016.001.0204) at 0260
 - 29 Exhibit 726 – National Inquiry on Bushfire Mitigation and Management (RSCH.004.003.1961) at 2339
 - 30 All data for this fire comes from Exhibit 726 – Inquiry into the Impact of Public Land Management Practices on Bushfires in Victoria (RSCH.016.001.0204) at 0260
 - 31 All data for this fire comes from Exhibit 726 – National Inquiry on Bushfire Mitigation and Management (RSCH.004.003.1961) at 2339
 - 32 Exhibit 11 – Statement of Esplin, Attachment 12 (WIT.005.001.1393) at 1418–1420