



## 2009 Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission

# MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday, 7 May 2009

## BUSHFIRE HEARINGS BEGIN

The first block of Royal Commission Bushfire Hearings will begin on Monday, 11 May 2009, at 9.30am at the County Court, 250 William Street, Melbourne.

“We are ready to begin rigorous examination of the events and circumstances of Black Saturday that resulted in so much loss of life and devastation,” said Chair of the Victorian Bushfires Royal Commission, Bernard Teague.

The first block of hearings will focus on what happened on 7 February 2009, warnings, and aspects of the ‘Stay or Go’ policy.

The Commission will examine individual fires including timing, intensity and the impact of wind and the south-westerly change on the fires.

Russell Rees, Chief Officer of the CFA; Ewan Waller, Chief Officer, Fire and Emergency Management, Department of Sustainability and Environment; Bruce Esplin, Emergency Services Commissioner and Kieran Walshe, Deputy Commissioner, Victoria Police are some of the individuals providing evidence.

“Our primary focus will be on issues that will help create a safer environment for Victorian communities” said Commissioner Teague, “We will concentrate on how to limit the devastation of any future intense bushfires and save lives”.

The Commission will be web-streaming the proceedings live at [www.royalcommission.vic.gov.au](http://www.royalcommission.vic.gov.au) and copies of transcripts will also be made available on the website.

Many regional libraries, mobile library services and metropolitan libraries will also host live streaming of the hearings and provide access to transcripts to interested community members.

Individuals and organisations are encouraged to continue to send in written submissions. Submissions provided to the Commission by 4.00pm on Monday, 18 May 2009 will be considered as part of the Interim Report due by 17 August 2009. Any submissions received after that date will be considered by the Commission as part of its ongoing work program and preparation of its Final Report which is expected to be delivered by July 2010.

Submission enquiries can be made via email to [enquiries@royalcommission.vic.gov.au](mailto:enquiries@royalcommission.vic.gov.au) or via telephone on 1800 243 650.