



**Australian Government**  
**Attorney-General's Department**

MC15-008372

13 December 2015

Ms Belinda Clarkson  
4 Felicia Rise  
DIAMOND CREEK VIC 3089

Dear Ms Clarkson

Thank you for your letter of 1 October 2015 to the Prime Minister regarding extreme bushfires in Victoria. This was referred to the Minister for Justice who has portfolio responsibility for this issue. The Minister has asked me to respond on his behalf.

Constitutional responsibility for emergency management and the protection of life and property lies with the states and territories. This includes responsibility for preparation and response to bushfires. This includes the management of bushfires and public warnings, using the best science and modelling information.

As previously advised, the Australian Government provides substantial support to states and territories to drive nationally consistent approaches and facilitate the sharing of resources and expertise. This includes enhancing bushfire systems, community education and public warnings. Please refer to the enclosed correspondence for further detail on these initiatives.

States and territories are best placed to identify the high-priority risks in their local communities and the specific measures that will address those risks. They implement activities and fund local grant initiatives which best meet specific jurisdictional needs. For example, the short video you refer to, 'Don't Wait and See,' was a local government initiative funded through a Victorian government grant. I suggest you 'credit' this to the appropriate source on your website <[www.elthamsdeathtrap.com](http://www.elthamsdeathtrap.com)>.

Thank you for writing on this matter. I trust the information provided is useful.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'W Kelly'.

Wendy Kelly  
A/g Assistant Secretary  
National Security Resilience Policy Division

Encl: Attorney-General's Department Correspondence, 22 December 2014 (MC14/23907)





**Australian Government**  
**Attorney-General's Department**

MC14/23907

22 December 2014

Ms Belinda Clarkson  
4 Felicia Rise  
DIAMOND CREEK VIC 3089

Dear Ms Clarkson

Thank you for your letter of 9 November 2014 to the Prime Minister regarding extreme bushfire warnings. This was referred to the Minister for Justice who has portfolio responsibility for national emergency management. The Minister has asked me to respond on his behalf.

Under Australia's constitutional arrangements, state and territory governments have primary responsibility for emergency management and for the protection of life and property. This includes the management of bushfires and public warnings, using the best science and modelling information available.

The Australian Government works in collaboration with states and territories to build disaster resilience and make Australia a safer place to live. Since the Victorian Bushfires in 2009, a significant amount of national work has been undertaken to enhancing bushfire systems, community education and public warnings. In particular, the Australian Government has contributed:

- \$59.5 million towards Emergency Alert, a telephone-based emergency warning system for state and territory emergency services to send warning messages to landlines and mobile phones
- \$15 million towards the National Bushfire Mitigation Programme to assist states and territories in implementing long term bushfire mitigation strategies and improved fuel reduction activities
- \$15 million towards the Bushfire Cooperative Research Centre to undertake a three year research program of tasks arising from the 2009 Victorian Bushfires
- \$48 million towards the new Bushfire Natural Hazards Cooperative Research Centre to undertake research streams dedicated to fire risk and a range of projects on risk communication, and
- \$ 234,000 towards a National Review of Warnings and Information to share knowledge and determine good practice in provision of warnings and information to communities during emergencies.



The Australian Government is also working with states and territories to scope and implement significant improvements to current national fire danger rating systems, and to strengthen the ability of fire authorities to accurately communicate bushfire risk to the community.

This year, the Australian Government also commissioned a Productivity Inquiry into natural disaster funding. This is the first comprehensive review of natural disaster funding arrangements in more than a decade, and provides an opportunity for reforms to emergency management and better protection of our communities. The Government is carefully considering the Productivity Commission's final findings and recommendations.

Thank you for writing on this matter. I trust the above information is useful.

The action officer for this matter is Wendy Kelly who can be contacted on 02 6141 2906.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Samantha Chard', written in a cursive style.

Samantha Chard  
Assistant Secretary  
National Security Resilience Policy Division

Telephone: (02) 6141 2970  
Email: <samantha.chard@ag.gov.au>