

Mr Tony Abbott  
Prime Minister  
Parliament House  
CANBERRA ACT 2600

2 November 2014

Dear Prime Minister,

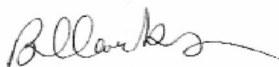
## **Australian disaster grants**

Your Minister the Hon Ian Macfarlane has written to my colleague and stated *"...information on bushfire statistics should be clear and not confuse readers"*<sup>1</sup>. In order to mitigate the effect of an extreme bushfire disaster in Victoria, accurate maximum hourly rate of spread figures are crucial because they enable the fire rate of spread to be predicted.

Extreme bushfire rate of spread predictions are used to activate warnings and survival plans. Victoria appears to be basing its extreme bushfire warning system on an apparently misinformed maximum hourly rate of spread of 9 kilometres per hour (km/h)<sup>2</sup>. The Australian Government, following extensive work by the CSIRO, is using a maximum hourly rate of spread of 24km/h<sup>1</sup>. In September 2014 the Victorian Premier referred my concerns on this issue to the Victorian Minister for Police and Emergency Services. It is now November with the fire season approaching and I have not heard back from the Minister.

In regard to your national responsibility for Australian disaster grants, would you please write to the Victorian Government and reiterate your Minister's informed statement that the maximum hourly rate of spread of extreme bushfire is *"...24km in an hour"*. Many Victorian lives will be at grievous risk if the Victorian Government's apparent misinformation is left uncorrected.

Yours sincerely,



Belinda Clarkson

Attached: <sup>1</sup> [Minister Macfarlane letter, 15 August 2014](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Victorian Emergency Management Commissioner letter, 10 September 2014](#)

**CC:**

Australian Capital Territory  
New South Wales  
Northern Territory  
South Australia  
Tasmania  
Queensland  
Victoria  
Western Australia

Chief Minister Katy Gallagher  
Premier Mike Baird  
Chief Minister Adam Giles  
Premier Jay Weatherill  
Premier Will Hodgman  
Premier Campbell Newman  
Premier Denis Naphthine  
Premier Collin Barnett

Opposition Leader:  
Opposition Leaders:

Bill Shorten  
Jeremy Hanson  
John Robertson  
Delia Lawrie  
Steven Marshall  
Bryan Green  
Annastacia Palaszczuk  
Daniel Andrews  
Mark McGowan