

Inquiry: Budget Estimates 2010-11

Date/Time: 25 May '10, 2:50pm

Witness Name: Gen. Ronaldson

**SECTION ONE: ESTABLISHMENT AND OPERATING FRAMEWORK***Establishment of VBRRRA*

Organisation: .....

5. The decision to establish VBRRRA was made jointly by the Victorian and Commonwealth governments on 10 February 2009. VBRRRA was formally established as an Administrative Office of the Department of Premier and Cabinet on 11 February 2009, by order of the Governor in Council.
6. The decision to establish VBRRRA was based largely on experiences from previous natural disasters in Australia, which demonstrated that the most effective method of recovery is to establish a body that will take responsibility for coordinating recovery activities as well as monitoring associated expenditure. The creation of VBRRRA incorporated elements of the bodies established to coordinate recovery efforts following the Canberra bushfires in 2003 and Cyclone Larry in 2006, as well as capturing the lessons learned from Victoria's response to the 2006-07 Gippsland fires.
7. The Chair of VBRRRA is Christine Nixon. Ms Nixon commenced in this role on 2 March 2009. Prior to that date the role of Chair had been performed on an interim basis by Major General John Cantwell of the Australian Defence Force.
8. The role of VBRRRA is primarily to coordinate and oversee the recovery and rebuilding of fire-affected communities through consultation and engagement with those communities affected by the fires, the corporate sector, charities, local councils, and Victorian and Commonwealth government agencies. VBRRRA also coordinated: the demolition and clean-up of destroyed or damaged properties; the management of donations and material aid; the establishment of temporary villages in Kinglake, Marysville and Flowerdale; and the establishment of temporary units in Whittlesea. These functions had not previously been incorporated into the role of a Victorian Government recovery body.

*Terms of Reference*

9. To guide VBRRRA in the performance of its functions it was established under the following Terms of Reference:
  - 9.1 Advise governments, coordinate efforts and develop an overarching plan for the restoration and recovery of regions, towns and communities affected by the 2009 Victorian bushfires;
  - 9.2 Work closely with the community in the process of rebuilding and recovery, and ensure that individuals and communities are consulted closely – with such consultations to be transparent and sensitive to local needs;
  - 9.3 Analyse, and advise governments on the impact of the bushfires on the communities, economy, infrastructure and environment in affected areas;
  - 9.4 Coordinate activities and the work of relevant organisations to help regions, towns and individuals re-establish their communities, once it is safe to do so, in a way that is respectful of individual and community needs;
  - 9.5 Ensure that services to people affected are easily available and coordinated across all levels of government and community organisations;
  - 9.6 Work with communities to develop coordinated plans to deal with the effects of the disaster on local economies, communities, infrastructure and the environment. These plans should cover the immediate recovery requirements and longer-term development;