

# David Koch

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### MEDIA RELEASE

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## **Victoria faces threat from mega wildfires this summer**

Victoria faces a serious risk from mega wildfires this summer says David Koch, Member for Western Victoria. Speaking in Parliament this week, he said that country Victorians have long been warning the State Government about the increased threat of mega wildfires due to an ideology designed to appease the green vote.

“In its pursuit of securing support of environmental groups the Brumby Government continues to bow to pressure that shuts down access to public land. City-dwelling tree huggers, who are without any real understanding of how to look after our natural wilderness, insist the Government must protect our pristine environment by shutting it up and throwing away the key.”

“This is exactly what the Government has been doing for years and now we see the fuel build-up in our forests becoming a major wildfire hazard.

“Last summer more than 1.1 million hectares, mostly across the State’s north and east, burnt continuously for 69 days and the previous summer saw 67 per cent of the Grampians go up in smoke, destroying more than 130 000 hectares of national park and private property.

“Fire restrictions in much of Victoria are being enforced earlier this year as rising temperatures and dry conditions increase fire threats while the Country Fire Authority is warning the Great Otway National Park is a major wildfire hotspot for this summer. If it is ignited we may see a repeat of the Ash Wednesday fires of 1983.

“The Bureau of Meteorology warns the onset of climate change could increase the incidence of above-average temperatures by 80 per cent, with a 50 per cent to 60 per cent chance of there being below average rainfalls.

David Koch said these recognised experts are warning of more mass mega wildfires that will undoubtedly cause extensive destruction of our natural environment if greater fire prevention measures are not implemented.

“Mega wildfires present a serious risk to the lives of Victorians. They cause widespread blackouts, water and air pollution, and threaten our urban and rural communities.

“The huge tracts of rural land and national parks locked up by the Government restrict access to carry out the necessary fire prevention works to reduce the threat of mega wildfires.

“When pressed, the Government says its measures will protect country and urban areas, but in reality, these measures do little more than restrict and even prevent proper wildfire risk management.

“The Minister for Environment and Climate Change, Gavin Jennings, must define and implement workable strategies to deal with the impending mega wildfire threat, and make public the actions to be undertaken by DSE and Parks Victoria prior to this and future fire seasons”, said David Koch.

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