

THE FIRES OF BLACK FRIDAY

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MSC

- Large areas of Victoria
- 2 million hectares
- Whole townships engulfed

- Large bushfires
- Extreme winds
- Large damage to environment and property

- Carelessness by humans
 - Many people lit fires randomly
- Fire believed to have originated from humans
 - Burning off for land clearing and grass growth
 - Lighting campfires
 - Inappropriate sawmill operations
 - Domestic fires
- After drought
- Severe, hot, dry summer
- Extremely strong winds

- Potential causes:
 - Land owners
 - Graziers
 - Miners
 - Forest workers
- Rural fire service
- Country fire authority

WHAT DO THEY THINK?

- No official cause identified
 - Potential causes identified above did not comment
- Fire brigade and management services say that it is very unlikely to ever get that bad again

AFTERMATH

- 71 people died
- Whole townships destroyed
- Many sawmills burned to ground
- Thousands of sheep, cattle, horses killed
- Millions of hectares of forests damaged
- Soil fertility affected
- Important water catchments impacted
- Soil burned so much that took decades for it to restore

- Fire was only present for short period of time in 1939
- Not there anymore

SHOULD IT BE LIKE THIS?

- No, it should not be like this
- Largely caused by many dangerous factors coinciding
- Not likely to occur again

- More back burning
 - These fires were the catalyst for widespread back burning
- Aerial firefighting
 - Water-bombing
- Better co-operation of competing agencies
- Better training for firefighters