

6.0 Other fires in Victoria

6.1 Delburn fire, late January 2009

During the first phase of the heatwave in late January 2009, several fires were deliberately lit in the Delburn, Mirboo North and Boolarra areas (ABCf 2009). Most of the ignition points were in the vicinity of the Strzelecki Highway (Zent pers comm, author's observation, see figure 6.1). Using DSE base maps, the author found approximately 6,300 hectares of plantation, farmland and native forests were fire affected.



Figure 6.1 One of the ignition points along the Strzelecki Highway. Ignition points are marked with Victoria Police tape (centre). (Photo: Chris Taylor, April 2009)

Timber plantations comprised 47 per cent of the land affected by the Delburn fire. Private land (26 per cent) and state forest (27 per cent) comprised the remainder. No National Parks or reserves in this area were affected by the fire (see Figure 6.2).

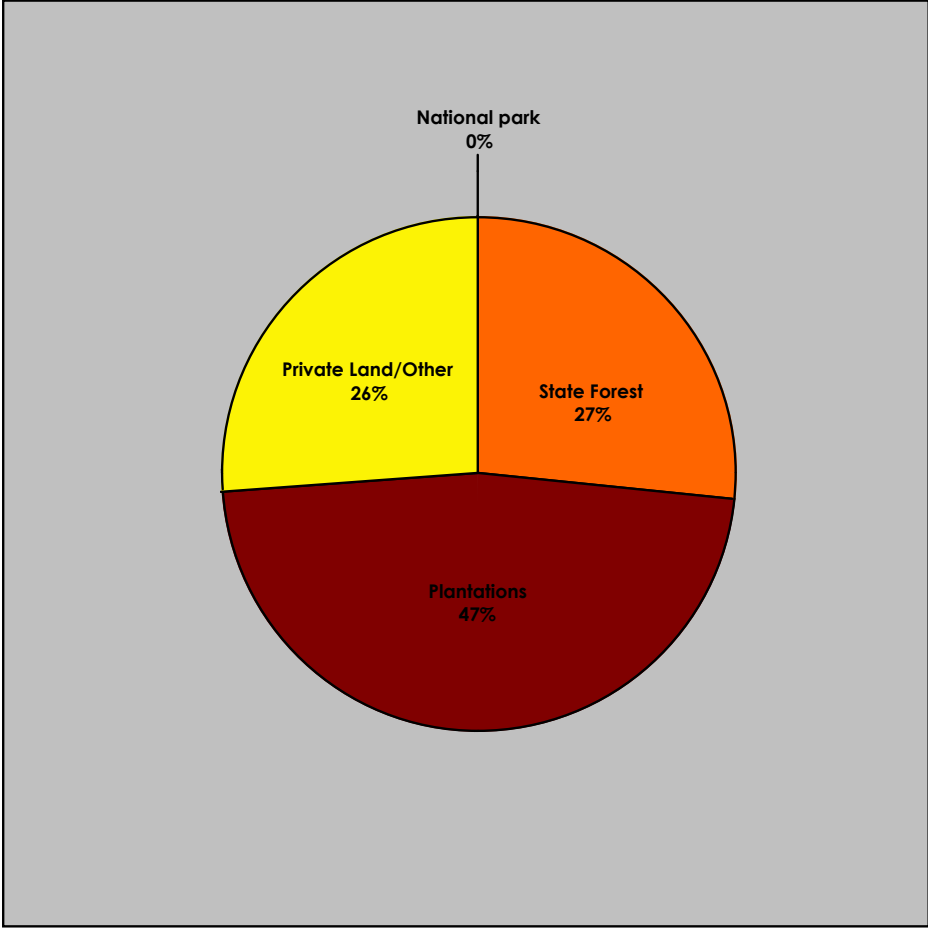
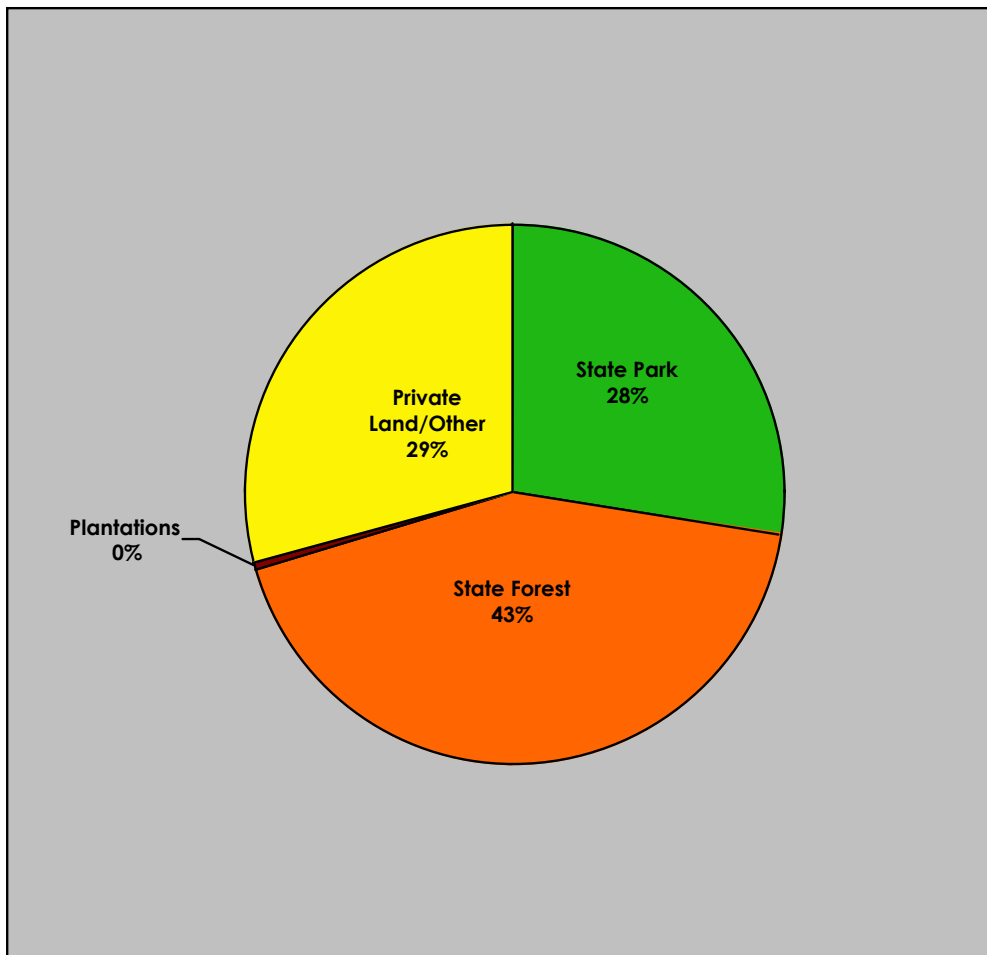


Figure 6.2 Delburn fire land tenure area affected.

6.2 Bunyip fire

Several fires were ignited by lightning in the Bunyip State Park following the first phase of the late January heatwave. Due to the higher humidity percentages and lower fire danger index, fire-fighting personnel were able to contain the fire (Jones pers comm). However, several fires were deliberately lit on 4 February 2009 (Miller 2009). It was one of those fires that intensified on 7 February (Jones pers comm).

As previously discussed, the Bunyip fire started in the Bunyip State Park. State forest comprised the largest area affected at 43 per cent. Private land and the state park comprised the next largest areas at 29 per cent and 28 per cent respectively. The author calculated these percentages using DSE base fire maps. These percentages are detailed in Figure 6.3.



3 Bunyip fire land tenure area affected.

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6.3 Erica fire

Late in the day of 7 February 2009, lightning ignited several fires in the Gippsland region. One of these was the fire north of the town of Erica (Waller 2009). The fire primarily burnt around the vicinity of the intersection of the South Face Road with the Moe Erica Road. Using DSE base maps, the author has calculated that state forest comprised 55 per cent of the fire affected areas and the Baw Baw National Park 45 per cent. No private land was affected (see figure 6.4).

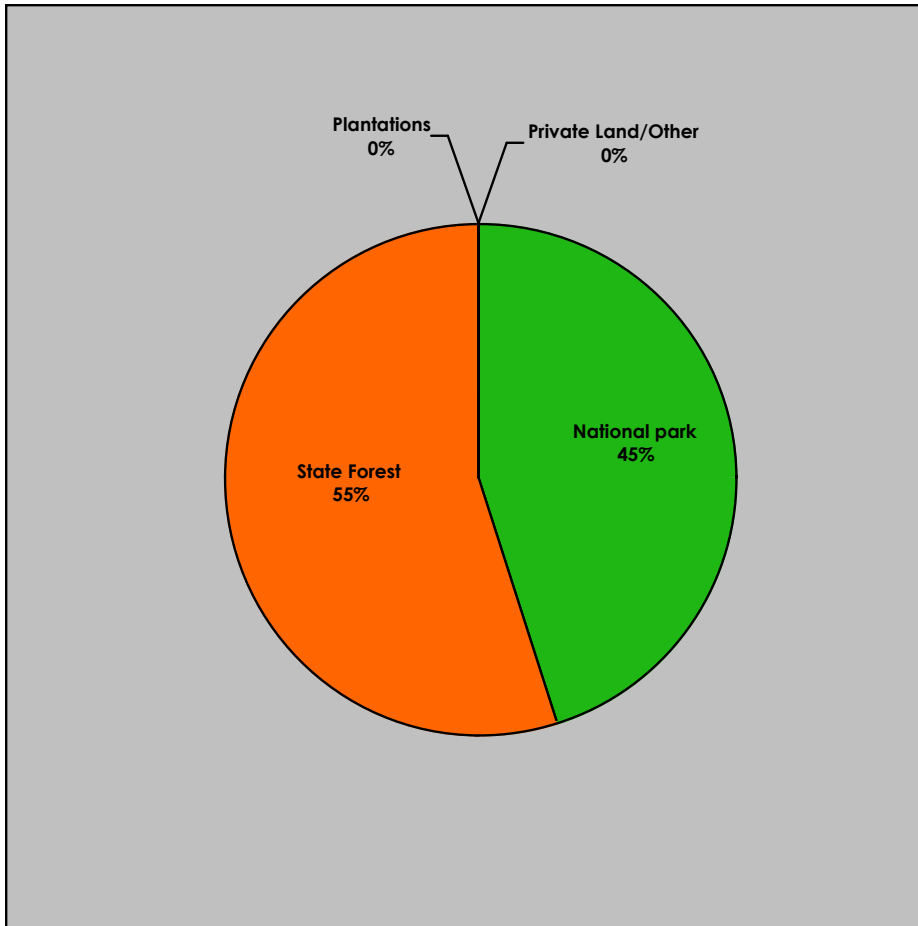


Figure 6.4 Erica fire land tenure area affected.

6.4 Beechworth fire

At 6pm on 7 February 2009, tree branches falling on powerlines are believed to have ignited the fires that burnt east of the town of Beechworth (Waller 2009). In total, 31,000 hectares were fire affected (Royal Commission 2009). Using DSE base maps, the author has determined that state forest comprised 51 per cent, private or leased land 41 per cent and plantations 8 per cent of the affected area (see figure 6.5).

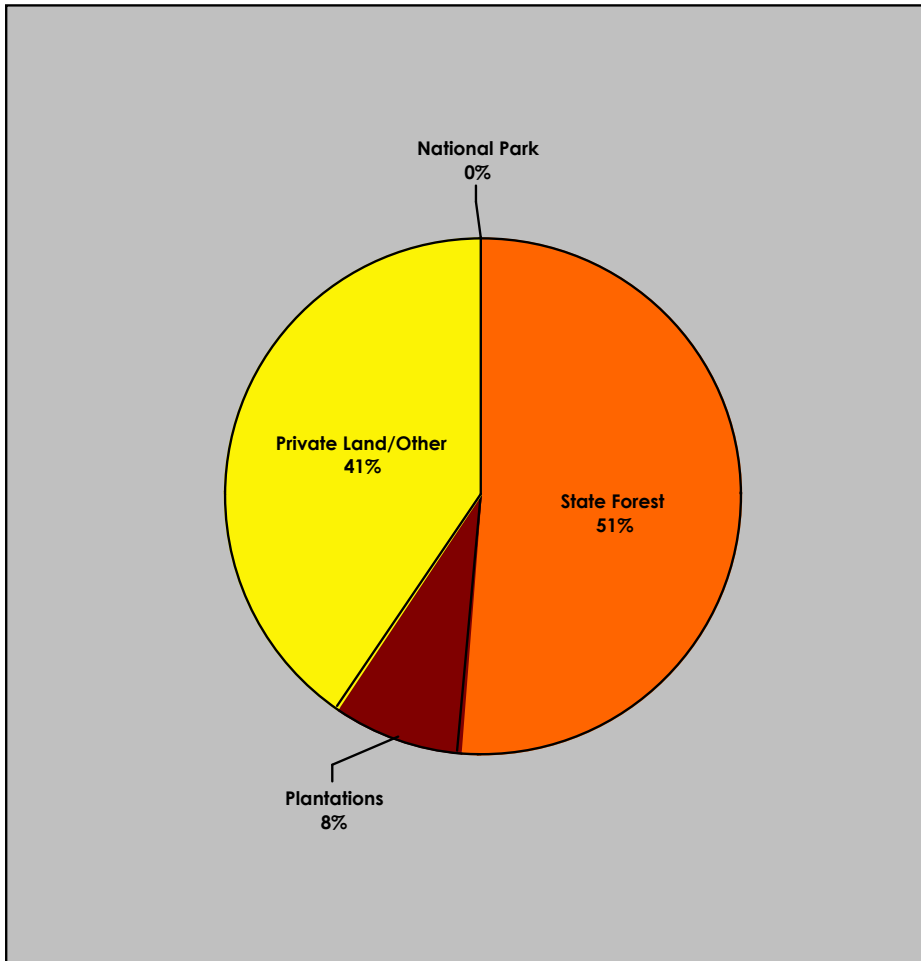


Figure 6.5 Beechworth fire land tenure area affected.

6.5 Redesdale fire

At 3:11pm on 7 February 2009, a fire was ignited alongside a road between Bendigo and Heathcote (Royal Commission 2009). It is not yet clear what started the fire. Using DSE base maps, the author has calculated the fire affected 9,500 hectares, of which private land comprised 97 per cent, with the remainder being state forest. This fire did not affect any National Park area (see figure 6.6)

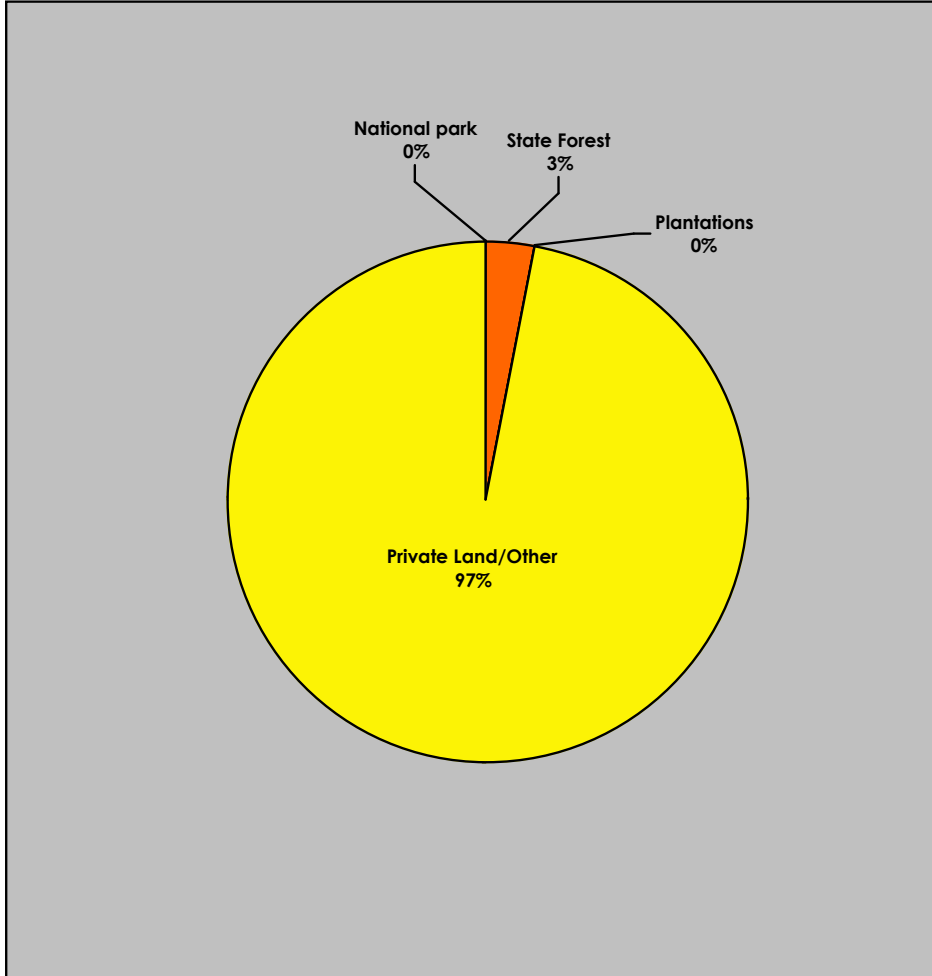


Figure 6.6 Redesdale fire land tenure area affected.

6.6 Daylesford fire

On 23 February 2009 a fire was ignited south of the town of Daylesford (Royal Commission 2009). Using DSE base maps, the author has determined that, of the 2,658 hectares fire affected, state forest comprised 51 per cent and private land 48 per cent. Plantations comprised the remaining 1 per cent (see figure 6.7)

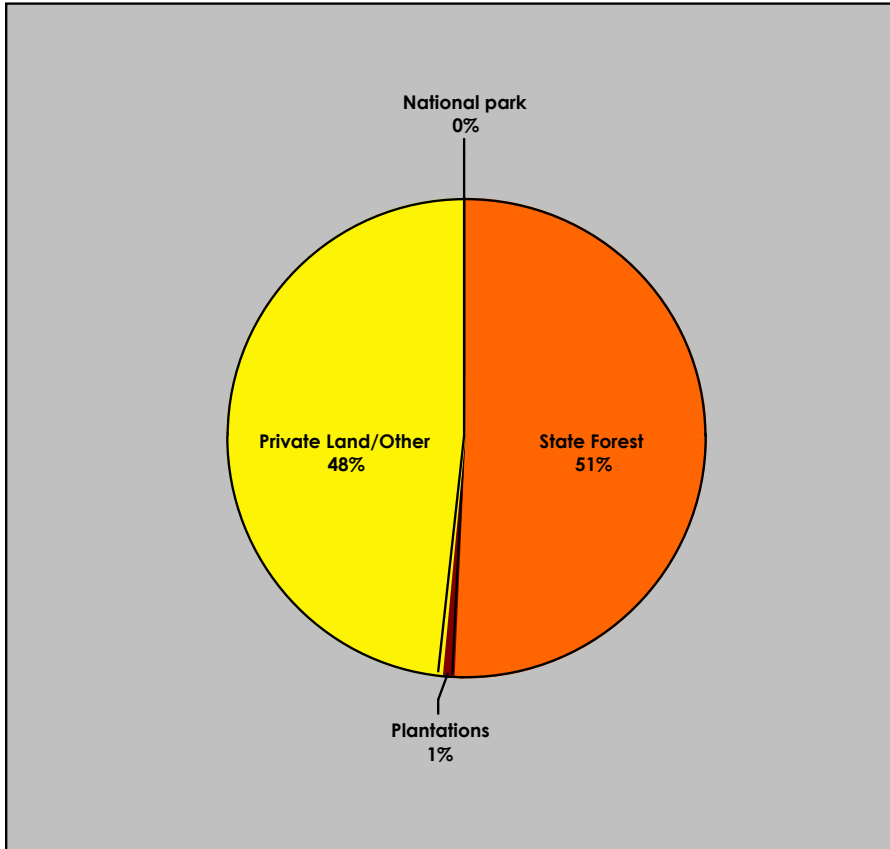


Figure 6.7 Daylesford fire land tenure area affected.

6.7 Fires affecting single land tenure

At 12:26pm on 7 February 2009 failing power infrastructure ignited a fire west of the town of Horsham (Tobin 2009). The fire affected a total area of 2,200 hectares, burning mostly on private land (Royal Commission 2009). Other fires were ignited in the west of Victoria, at Coleraine (at approximately 12:36pm) and Weerite (at approximately 1:17pm) (Royal Commission 2009). Failing power infrastructure is believed to have ignited these fires which primarily affected private land (Tobin 2009).

Prior to 7 February 2009 lightning ignited a fire in remote state forest near the town of Dargo (Waller 2009). Upon measuring the fire affected area on DSE base maps, the author notes that the fire burnt only through state forest and affected a total area of 13,640 hectares. No private property or National Parks were affected.

On 8 February lightning ignited a fire on Mount Cathedral, north of Sealers Cove at Wilsons Promontory (Royal Commission 2009, Parks Victoria 2009). The fire was confined to Wilsons Promontory National Park and affected a total area of 25,200 hectares (DSE 2009). The fire affected the damp forests of Mount Cathedral in varying intensity, however, the fire intensified once it spread to the tea tree dominated vegetation west of Five Mile Beach and north towards Chinaman's Swamp.