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Australian Government

Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

**ANDREW FISHER BUILDING
ONE NATIONAL CIRCUIT
BARTON**

Reference: MC23-072034

Mr Tim Malseed
President
Firestick Estate Inc
1 Short Cut Road
ELTHAM VIC 3095

Dear Mr Malseed

Thank you for your letter of 1 September 2023 regarding traditional knowledge and bushfire risk reduction. The Prime Minister has asked me to reply on his behalf.

The Australian Government recognises the importance of First Nations' voices and leadership in bushfire and other hazard risk reduction, response and recovery. Australian, state and territory governments are working together to strengthen and embed the role and connection of First Nations and traditional land management practices across the hazard continuum. This implements recommendations of the Royal Commission into National Natural Disaster Arrangements relating to Indigenous land and fire management (recommendations 18.1 and 18.2).

Through the Indigenous Ranger Program (IRP), the Australian Government acknowledges and supports First Nations peoples' unique, critical and continuing role in land and fire management. The IRP assists First Nations peoples to manage Country in accordance with Traditional owners' objectives including cultural burning and bushfire mitigation. The Australian Government's \$1.3 billion funding commitment to the IRP will expand the number of Indigenous rangers from 1,900 to 3,800 by 2030. For more on the IRP, please visit the National Indigenous Australians Agency at www.niaa.gov.au

The Australian Government supported the inaugural National Indigenous Disaster Resilience Summit held on 21 August 2023. The Summit brought together Indigenous and non-Indigenous researchers, emergency management practitioners, and agency heads, to build awareness, share new thinking, and network.

On 25 August 2023, Emergency Management Ministers from the Australian, state and territory governments endorsed the Second National Action Plan of the National Disaster Risk Reduction Framework (Second National Action Plan), and released it on the National

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Emergency Management Agency's website at: www.nema.gov.au/about-us/policies/strategies-and-frameworks.

The Second National Action Plan is intended to guide actions by all individuals, communities, organisations, sectors, and governments. Emergency Management Ministers have committed to working with all stakeholders to implement it.

The Second National Action Plan (particularly National Actions 4, 6, 11, 19 and 20) emphasises building evidence and informing effective decisions by integrating local knowledge and lived experience, including traditional knowledge. It encourages ensuring that First Nations and local communities partner in co-designing frameworks and approaches that embed 'Caring for Country' as a first principle in disaster risk reduction efforts, that are place-based, community-led and locally-implemented, and that ensure equity and inclusion across the system.

To give communities certainty to plan for robust disaster risk reduction projects, the Australian Government has committed \$1 billion funding for its flagship program, the Disaster Ready Fund (DRF). Australian Government funding is generally matched with funding from other governments, meaning a total of up to \$400 million a year will be available to invest in resilience projects.

DRF applicants are required to consult with relevant First Nations' communities before submitting applications for projects with a place-based focus. Of the 187 projects announced so far, 76, with a total value of \$176.6 million, directly engage, involve, and benefit First Nations' communities.

Thank you again for bringing your concerns to the Prime Minister's attention.

Yours sincerely



Jason Dymowski
Assistant Secretary
Resilience, Recovery and Response Branch
16 October 2023



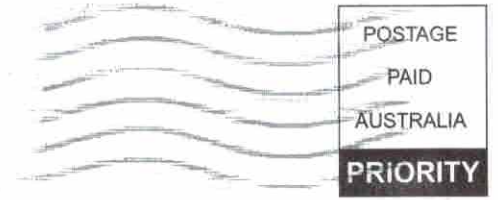
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