

U.S. Firefighter Australia Deployment



Jan 21 - Feb 22, 2007

Our Partnership



American Partners:

Bureau of Indian Affairs



Bureau of Land Management



U.S. Forest Service



U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service



National Park Service



Our Partnership



Australian Partners:

State Government of Victoria
Department of Sustainability &
Environment



State Government of Victoria
Department of Primary
Industries



Victoria Parks



National Parks & Wildlife Service

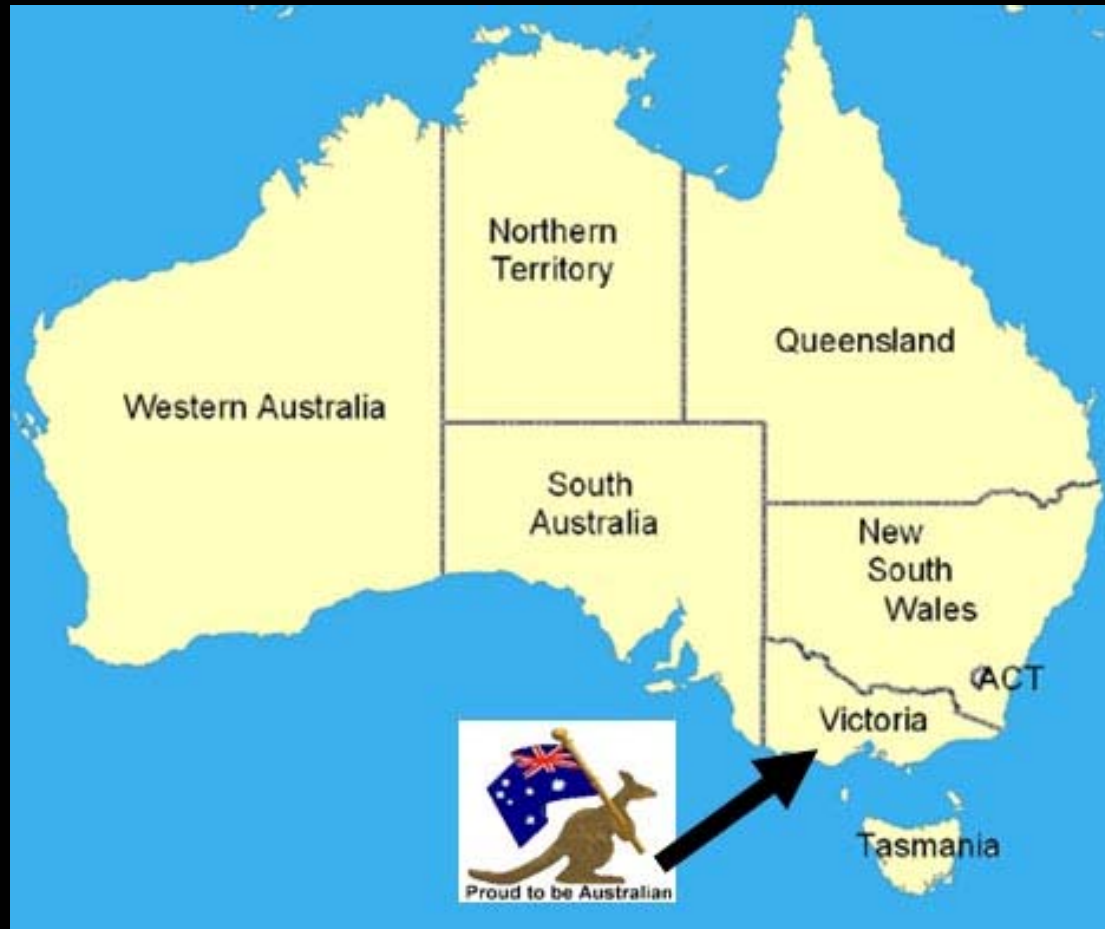


N.S.W. Rural fire Service

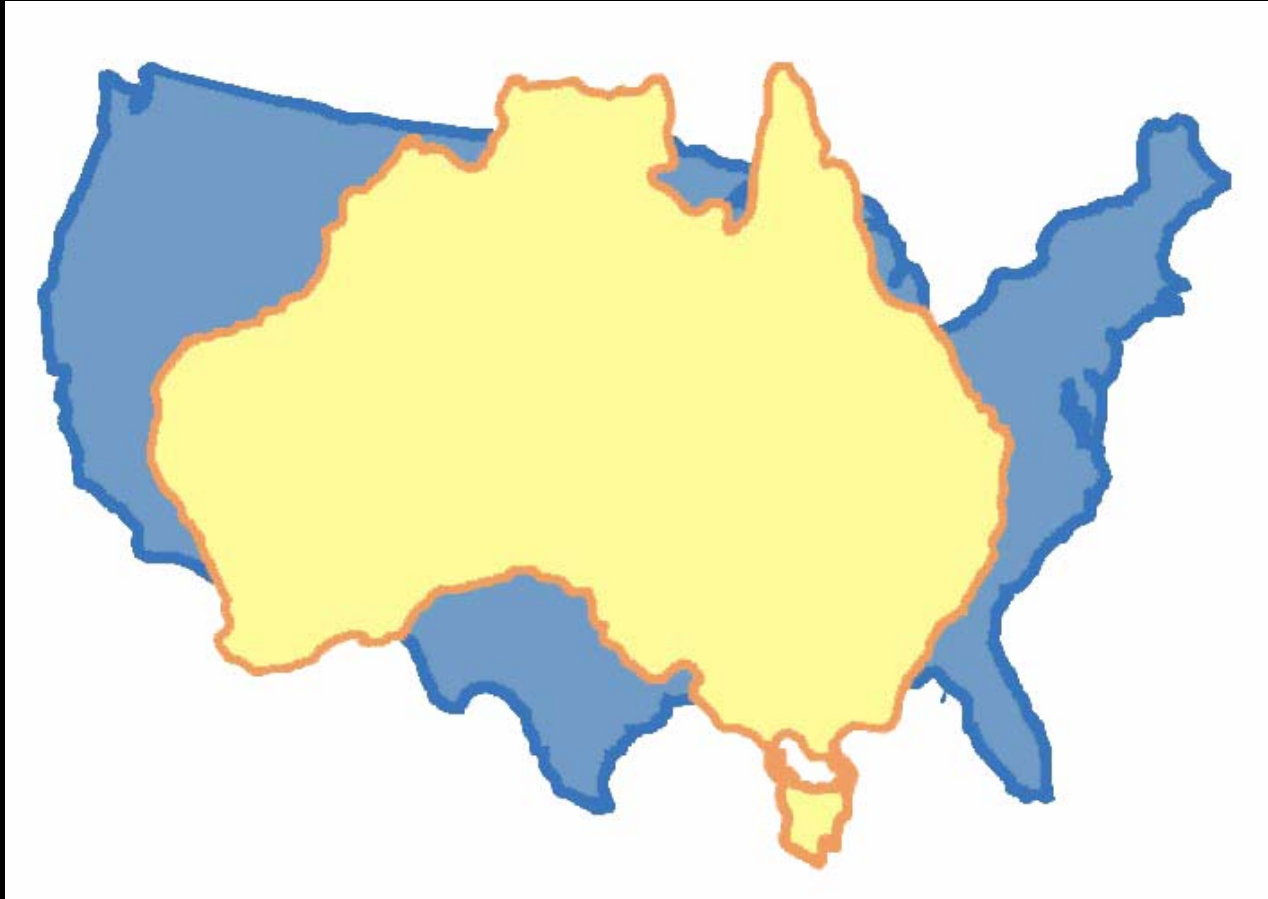


CFA

Where We've Been



Australia's One Big County



A Bit About Australia and Victoria

20 million people (U.S. 300 million)

7.7 million sq. km (U.S. 9.6 million)

6 states, 2 territories

- Victoria has:
 - 5 million people
 - 227,000 sq km
- **3 Fire Agencies:**
 - Dept. of Sustainability and Environment (DSE)
 - Country Fire Authority (CFA)
 - Metropolitan Fire Brigade (MFB)

Dept of Sustainability and Environment:

- 2,000 Employees
- 600 seasonal fire fighters
- Manage fire and emergency on all public land (33%)

Country Fire Authority:

- 58,000 Volunteers
- 1,228 Brigades
- 400 paid fire fighters
- 1,100 paid administrative staff
- Manage fire and emergencies on country and regional private land

Metropolitan Fire Brigade:

- 1,500 paid fire fighters
- Manage fire and emergency metropolitan Melbourne

5 Regions and 23 Districts



Victoria Fires and Burn Statistics



Yearly Average

- 625 fires
- 101,500 hectares (250,820 acres)

30-year Average

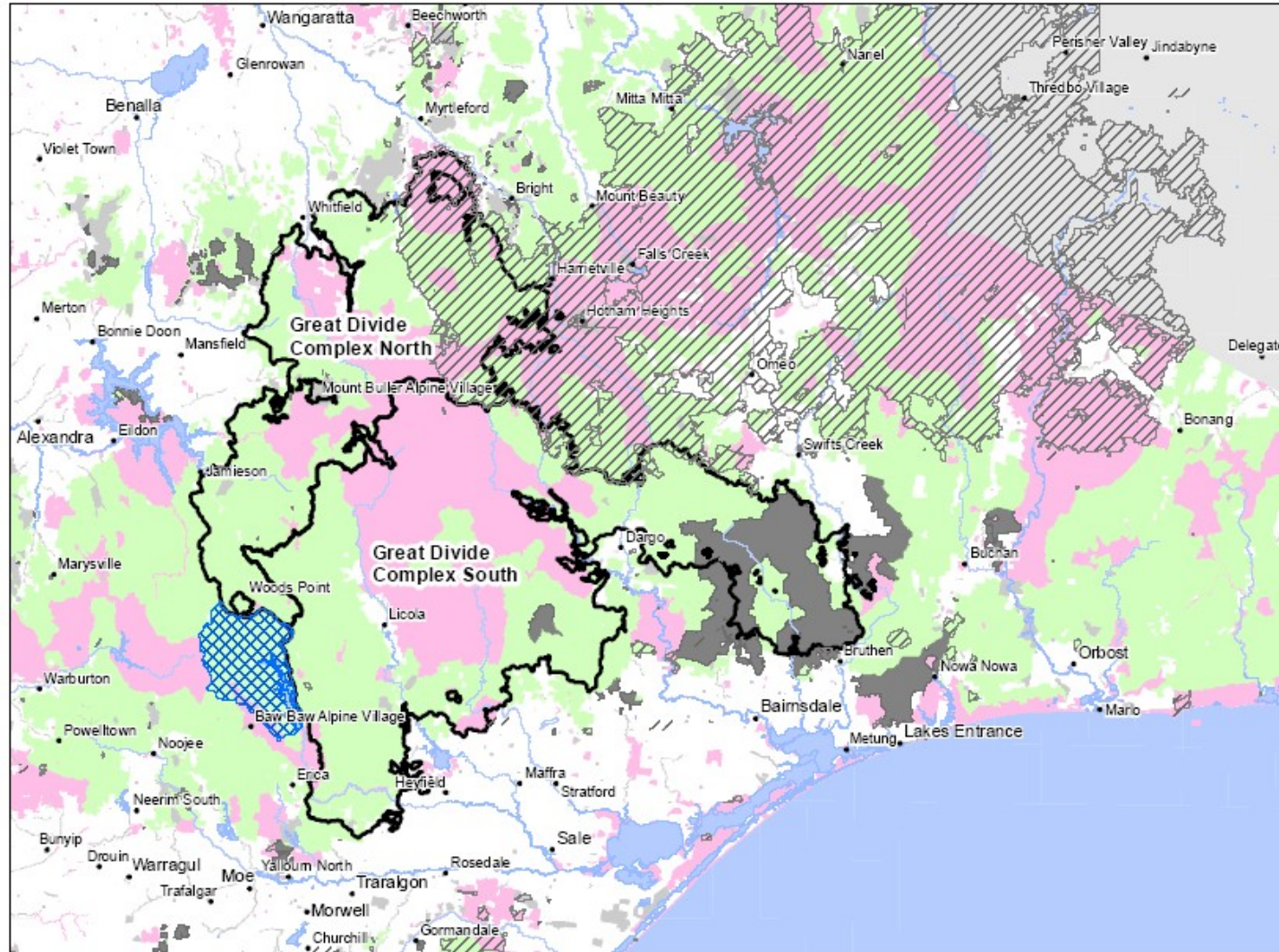
- 431 fires
- 106,941 hectares (264,270 acres)

2006-2007 Year-to-Date

- 731 fires
- 1,192,359 hectares (2,946,438 acres)

Eastern Victoria Fires of 2006-2007

Eastern Victoria Great Divide Fires - Contained as at 0700hr 7/2/2007



Department of Sustainability and Environment

- Great Divide Nth/Sth
- Major Watercourse
- Current Land Use
 - Parks and Reserves
 - State Forest
 - Other Public Land
 - Private Land
 - Waterbody
 - Thomson Water Supply Catchment
 - 2003 Fires

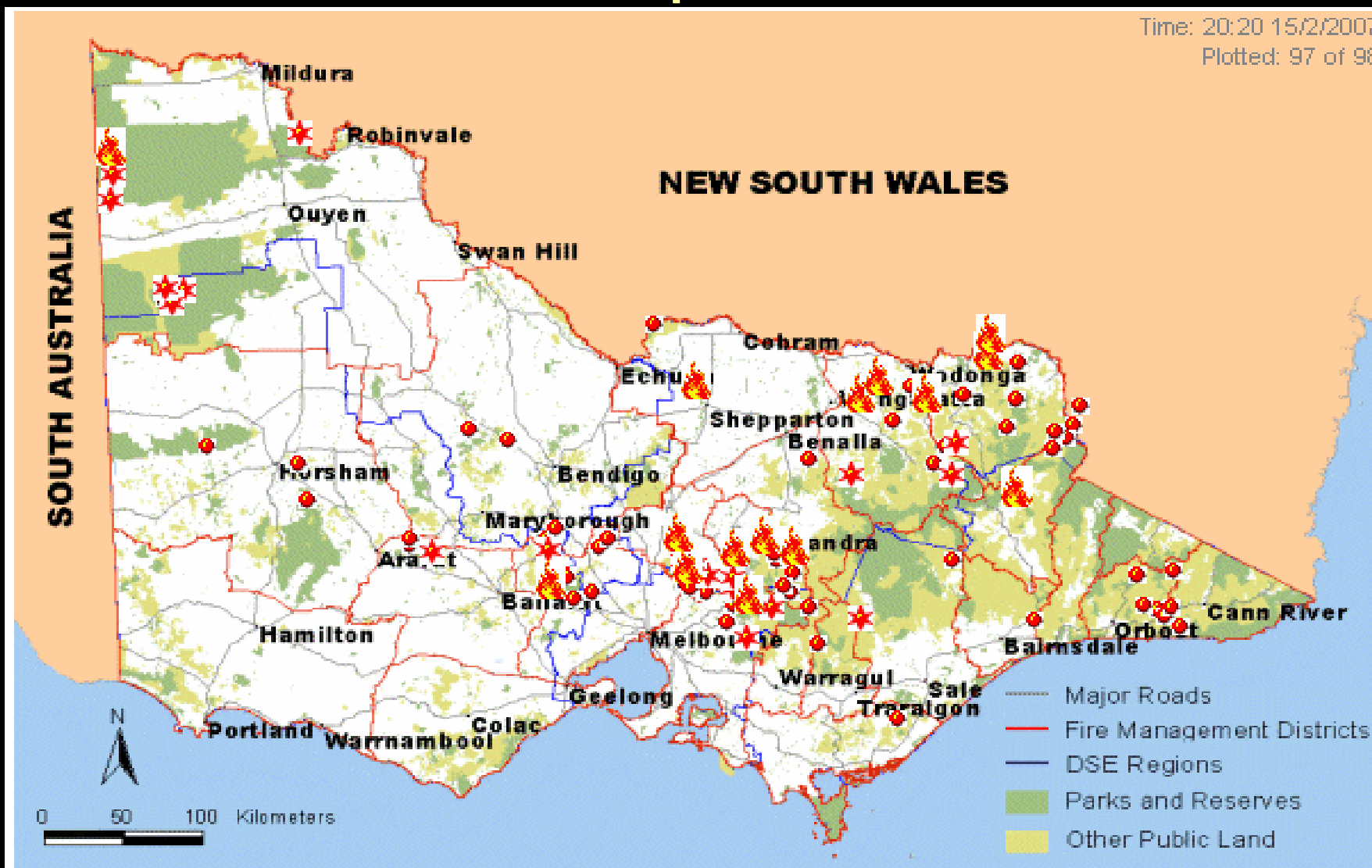
0 5 10 20 Kilometers

Disclaimer: This map is a snapshot generated from Victorian Government data. This Material may be of assistance to you but the State of Victoria does not guarantee that the publication is without flaw of any kind or is wholly appropriate for your particular purposes and therefore disclaims all liability for error, loss, damage which may arise from reliance upon it.

Statewide Fire Situation Map

Time: 20:20 15/2/2007

Plotted: 97 of 98



Fire Status: Going: [flame icon] Contained: [star icon] Under Control: [circle icon]

U.S. Deployment Included 108 Firefighters, Supervisors and Managers from 18 States

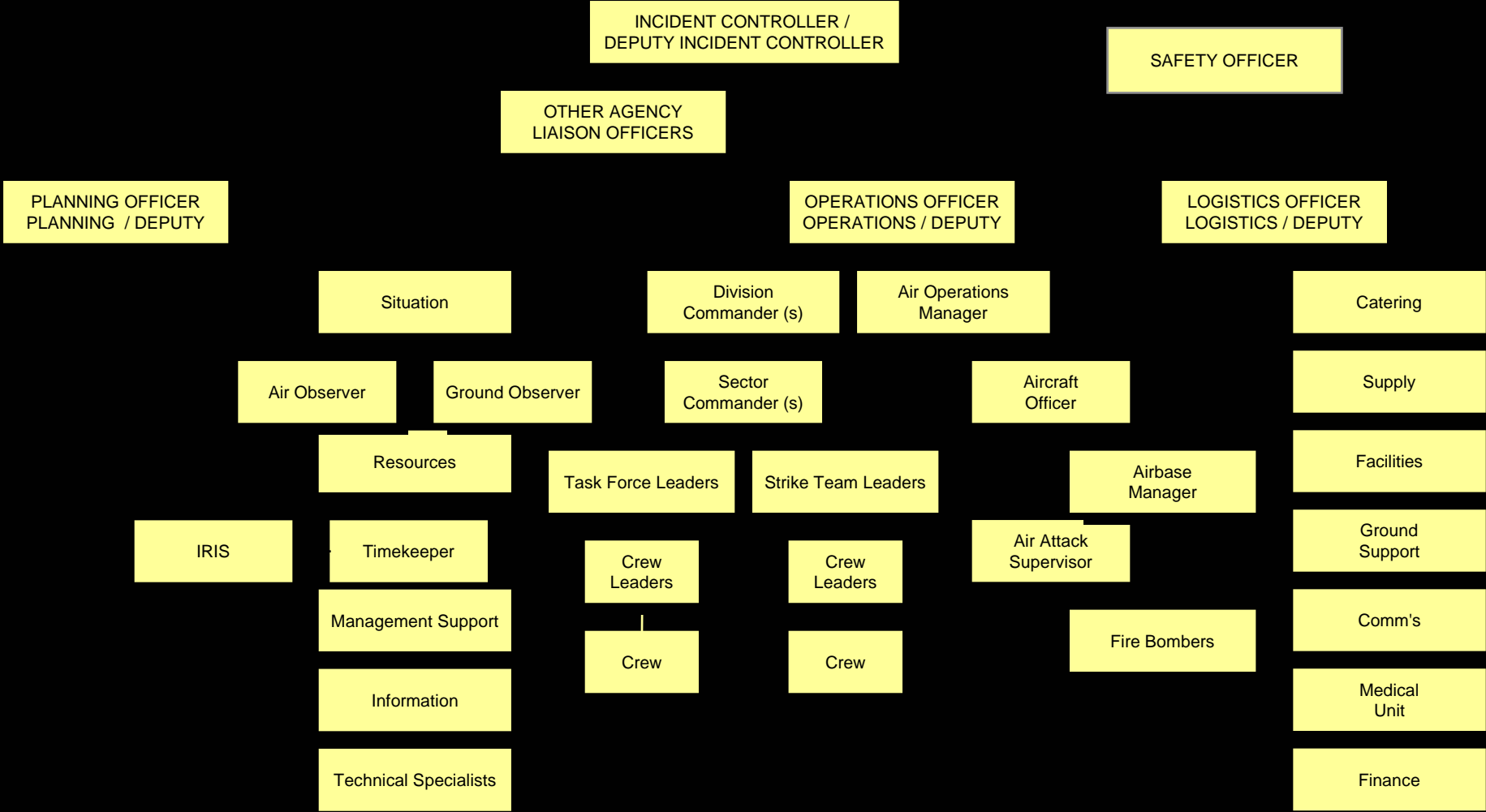
- **2 Type 1 Hotshot Crews**
 - **Rocky Mountain**
 - **Great Basin**
- **8 Operation Section Chiefs**
- **3 Air Ops Branch Directors**
- **4 Air Support Group Supervisors**
- **3 Helibase Managers**
- **10 Division/Group Supervisors**
- **10 Task Force Leaders**
- **5 Planning Section Chief**
- **7 Resource Leaders**
- **4 Situation Unit Leaders**
- **2 Infrared Coordinators**
- **4 Logistic Chiefs**
- **1 Supervisor Dispatcher**
- **3 U.S. Liaisons**
- **4 Public Information Officers**

Mission Assignment

- Assist with fire suppression efforts in Victoria.
- Be available for “First Attack” dispatching (IA).
- Provide Incident Management Team support for “going” fires.
- Assist with suppression rehabilitation and fire recovery.



Australian Incident Management Structure (AIMS)



Firefighter's Induction in Melbourne Two-day Orientation Covered

- **Australian Culture and Slang**
- **Agency Familiarization (DSE, CFA, MFB)**
- **Current Situation, Drought Conditions, “Going” Fires**
- **Fire Behavior, Fuels, Weather, Topography**
- **Typical Operational Day, Life on the Fireline, Base Camp**
- **Incident Management Structure (AIMS)**



Firefighter's Induction in Melbourne

- **Fireline Operations**
- **Welfare and Fireline Safety**
- **Hazard Assessment and Watch-out Situations**
- **Driving in Australia and on the Fireline**
- **Taking Refugee**
- **Communications and Radios**
- **Aviation Safety and Firebombing**

Australian Slang

They Said

Fair dinkum

Owyagoin

Stag

Rakeho

Slipon

Tanker

Fire Bomber

It Means

It's true

How are You?

Snag

McCleod

Light Engine

Heavy Engine

SEATS

Hazards and Differences

Fire Behavior...

- Most of the Influences are similar
- Some are very different at latitude 37 degrees
- Aussie's use the "McArthur Forest Fire Danger Index (FFDI)
- Scale is 0 to 100
- Above FFDI 50 means extreme behavior, crown fire, intense spotting
- Hand crews have difficulty at FDDI 10



Fire Behavior and Weather

- Tankers and dozers usually fail at FFDI 20
- Sun tracks across the northern sky, not the southern sky
- Solar navigation of North and South reversed
- Weather - extreme fire danger - generally hot dry N-NW wind out of the dry interior



Fire Behavior and Fuels...

- Observe carefully
- Over 700 species of Eucalyptus dominate the tree flora of Australia.
- Stringy Bark - usually intense, short distance 10 - 200 m
- Ribbon/Gum Bark - long distance usually 500 m to 5 km



Equipment Differences



4000 Litre 1000 gal Tanker



Fire Blanket



Steel Toe Cap Boots/Nitrile Sole



Mobile and Handheld Radios



Rakeho



400 Litre 100 gal Slipon

Emergency Coordination Centre

- **U.S. role : Relieve Australian personnel (70 days worked).**
- **ECC is funded and staffed by DSE – located in Melbourne.**
- **Have State-wide responsibilities for coordinating bushfire suppression and non-fire emergencies for Victoria only.**
 - **Minimal coordination with other Australian states.**
 - **Compares with the U.S. NICC but on a smaller scale.**
- **Coordinates directly with the 5 DSE Regions who in turn coordinates with the 23 Districts**
 - **U.S. equivalent would be GACC's coordinating with local units.**



Emergency Coordination Centre

- **ECC operates under Australian Incident Command System (AIMS).**
 - **US. equivalent would be NIIMS and ICS.**
- **State Duty Officer (SDO) is responsible for all ECC operations.**
 - **U.S. equivalent would be NICC Center Director.**
 - **Position rotates on a daily basis as do all ECC functions.**
- **State Air Coordinator, Logistics Officer and Planning Officer work directly for the SDO.**
 - **State Air Coordinator (SAC) also works for CFA Duty Officer.**
 - **Responsible for strategic oversight of aircraft, availability, preparedness and use.**
 - **2 Air Officers normally work for the SAC each shift.**
 - **Air Officers are responsible for flight following, coordinate and support aviation managers in the field, and assist with aircraft priority.**



Emergency Coordination Centre

- **Logistics Officer is standard U.S. approach with exception of purchasing authority housed here.**
 - **Usually staffed with 2-4 additional personnel per shift.**
- **Planning Officer is “right hand” of SDO.**
 - **Directs and coordinates staff activity.**
 - **Bulk of ECC staff is in planning.**
- **U.S. personnel filled all of the listed positions except the State Duty Officer, State Air Coordinator, Rostering and Management Support.**

Corryong and Mansfield Assignments

- 81 U.S. firefighters and IMT members were assigned to the Hermit Mountain Fire, 40 km SE of Corryong in NE Victoria on Jan 25.
- Fire was burning in the Alpine National Park within Victoria and New South Wales.
- Assisted Australian firefighters with securing firelines, “blacking out,” patrol, and “first attack.”
- Crews were staged at Tom Groggin, home of “The Man From Snowy River”
- Final fire size was 2,770 ha (6,845 acres) in Victoria and 2,300 ha (5,684 acres) in New South Wales, contained on Feb 5.



Corryong and Mansfield

- **Crews assisted with recovery work on the Man From Snowy River “high track.”**
- **Cleared fallen trees, removed debris and improved track drainage.**
- **31 firefighters were reassigned to the Mansfield to assist with rehabilitation and recovery of walking and bridle tracks in Alpine National Park.**
- **16 firefighters assisted local DSE and CFA crews with suppression action on the Tatong Fire in the Goulburn District.**















Swifts Creek Assignment

- **56 U.S. firefighters and IMT members were assigned to the Great Divide Fire South in SE Victoria.**
- **The South Complex, started by lightning on Dec 1, was declared contained on Feb 7 at 677,638 ha (1,674,511 acres) after burning 69 days.**
- **U.S. firefighters worked with local firefighters, securing control lines, conducting burnout operations, “blacking out, and responding to “first attack.”**
- **U.S. division superintendents and strike team leaders functioned as “task force leaders,” supervising crews and operations in the field.**

Swifts Creek

- **U.S. air operation specialists tracked and scheduled firebirds, fire bombers, and rappelling helicopters.**
- **IMT members filled key positions and completed rehab assessment and plans.**
- **Hotshot crews also assisted in rehab efforts, installing water bars on dozer lines, putting in culverts with water-deflecting flumes attached, and clearing burned-out wattles out of roadside ditches.**





Community and Media Relations



