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PRIME MINISTER

FOR PRESS

24 FEBRUARY 1977

"Joint Statement by the Prime Minister and the Acting Premier of Victoria -

VICTORIAN BUSH FIRES 1977 - REPLACEMENT OF BOUNDARY FENCES

The Federal and State Governments have agreed that Government funds will be provided to meet the cost of materials used by landholders in replacing their boundary fences abutting roads and railway lines.

Mr. Fraser and Mr. Thompson said that this decision had been made in order to hasten the restoration of fencing along roads and railways which was burnt out in the recent fires. This fencing must be replaced as soon as possible to allow re-stocking of properties to commence without endangering the safety of road and rail users and stock.

Municipalities in the area will be asked to help in the administration of the scheme.

Assistance up to a maximum of \$850 per kilometre for materials actually used in replacement fencing will be provided.

Mr. Fraser and Mr. Thompson praised the people in the bush fire areas for the speedy and effective way they have gone about obtaining and distributing fodder and other essentials and commencing rehabilitation of their properties. They expressed the hope that the Governments' action in regard to boundary fencing would assist in this process.

Ministers pointed out that this assistance goes beyond the normal assistance arrangements which apply in cases of natural disasters. The assistance is made available as a special measure in this case in recognition of the extent and magnitude of the recent bush fires."