



## ***Bushfires***

### ***Immediate to Long Term Effects***

*The Alpine fires of 2003 were different to any lightning caused fire event in the past in that 527,100 ha or 53% of the 'treed' forest affected by the fires was burnt by fire intense enough to severely scorch the crowns of all the trees or burn their crowns right off.*

*It is very doubtful if more than half of such a large area of alpine forest was burnt so severely in the past by fires started by lightning. Certainly not since European settlement started and unlikely before then.*

*Nature caused the fires but the 2003 fire event was not natural. Those fires were fed by fuels that accumulated over decades where natural fires had been deliberately extinguished and little or nothing had been done to reduce those accumulating fuels by planned burning or any other means.*

*In those places the fires were feral and burnt over extensive areas with an intensity and uniformity that was alien to the natural processes that forest require for their health, diversity and sustainability.*

**Above:** Here the main fire front has reached a ridge top. The dark smoke plumes are convection columns of rapidly rising hot air. They are capable of dragging the main fire front and the spot fire front together, trapping wildlife between them as they burn towards each other. Direct observations and other evidence shows that sambar descend to the valley floor just ahead of the main front where they unwittingly seek refuge in dense cover on stream flats which become an oven when the fire sweeps through. Photo David Young, DSE Bairnsdale. Fire behaviour interpretation by Ian Sebire, Forestry Victoria, Bairnsdale.

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