

In response to your email concerning the bush fires of 2018 I wish to state that I am 70 years old and I have lived in the Finch Hatton/Netherdale area all my life. Over the years of living in the Valley I have NEVER seen fire that has devastated the mountain range of Eungella and cane growing areas to such destruction.

The fire I witnessed and fought in November/December of 2018 burnt the entire range and surrounding areas including houses sheds machinery and crops. To compound the devastation the northern side of the range was also on fire which in my life time has NEVER happened. Due to this fire we have tree loss and erosion which will take many years to repair and for regrowth to take place.

As you are aware with tree loss and exposure of the land there will be opportunity for grasses to germinate and take over areas previously shaded by trees and in the ensuing months will create another fuel source which in turn will lead to another fire without State Government management.

In the past there was leased managed grazing of the ranges which was very effective in keeping the fuel levels down. The owner of the lease would control burn one ridge each year around May. However some politician in all their misguided wisdom decided the grazing cattle creating cattle pads through the ranges caused erosion. Therefore the leases were cancelled and the miss management of the State Forrest took over ultimately leading up to the bush fires we witnessed recently.

I am a member of Rural Fire and at a recent meeting all that was discussed was what clothing and machinery was needed. We should be talking about Hierarchy of Control. For example: ELIMINATION, SUBSTITUTION, ENGINEERING, ADMINISTRATION, PPE in that order.

We the cane farmer are accountable for the upkeep of our land. Please note Mr Canavan in the past we had the Upper Valley River Trust which took care of the meandering Cattle Creek. The reason this Trust was put in place was because in the 1940's the creek was bulldozed to keep it in its course but the local Council cancelled the Trust and now the creek because it had not been maintained has started devouring properties and altering its course.

I have contacted Jason Costigan concerning the creek after the last flood but nothing was done about it. He informed me I had to get a permit and finance it myself after the problem was originally started by the bulldozing of the creek in 1940.

Mr Canavan I am extremely disappointed about politicians who do not understand the grass roots of protecting our land. Without the farmers and their on going knowledge

this bush fire event would have been extremely serious. The Government in all their wisdom had blamed the 2 cyclones for the fuel build up but the range was not controlled burned for over 4 years. This is a crime and a copout for the Government in caring for the National Park.

Hoping you will take this information on board and see where we are coming from. We too are Queenslanders and love our land and our forests.

NORM LADLEY