



Friday, 9 May 2003

The Secretary  
House Select Committee on the recent Australian bushfires  
House of Representatives,  
Parliament House,  
Canberra ACT 2600

Submission No.216

Bushfires.reps@aph.gov.au

Dear Secretary,

The Australian Institute of Landscape Architects (AILA) is a professional body which provides the primary leadership, structure and network to harness and focus the intellectual energy of Australian landscape architects in the creation of more meaningful, enjoyable, equitable and sustainable environments. Landscape Architects are called upon daily to develop considered solutions to development within natural settings that balance land management, public amenity, environmental conservation and developer needs.

The Institute commends the establishment of the Select Committee but counsels against a knee-jerk reaction to the recent bushfires. We call for a balanced urban design, planning and land management approach that minimizes bushfire risk, conserves environmental values and preserves the amenity of urban and township landscape settings.

It is important that the inquiry recognises urban landscape settings are highly valued by residents and much of the wider population as peaceful and attractive areas, places which offer respite from hard-edged urban environments, and as distinctive features of Australian cities and towns. The qualities of these settings are largely derived from built form, open space and infrastructure being set within areas of vegetation.

To minimize bushfire risk while retaining the amenity of these settings and conserving environmental values the Institute encourages a broad and integrated management and design approach. This would include the active management of non urban land, considered and sensitive siting of housing together with appropriate design of buildings and landscape.

The Institute also encourages policies and statutory controls to be drafted at a catchment or local government level (possibly under the auspices of a State body) in order to respond to different environments and therefore varying levels of bushfire risk.

We would welcome further discussion with the Committee on this issue, as well as Institute representation on the Committee.

Yours faithfully

Noel Corkery

AILA National President

**AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS**

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