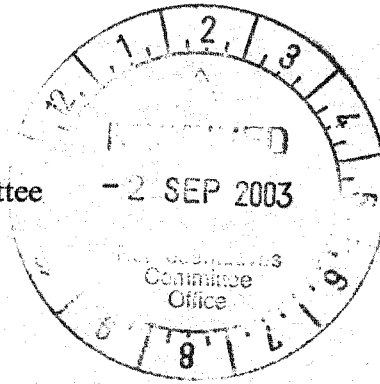




Colin McKenna

The Secretary of Select Committee
For Bushfires.
Parliament House
Canberra. ACT.



Dear Secretary,

I am offering this submission in an effort to help in the decision making of fire prevention measures.

The number of trucks and firefighters etc. is not my area of first-hand knowledge, so I will leave this problem with the people who know,

Prevention:- yes I do know about prevention. The fires of Canberra and the high country could have been prevented..

The Main perpetrator of these catastrophies was Dr. Brown, supported by Ignorant, I repeat Ignorant Zealots. They know nothing about the causes of bushfires so they follow the idea's of the fanatical greens.

Their common sense and knowledge if they had any would fit in a thimble.

Why then was notice taken of them. The answer is simple, they campaigned relentlessly for years. Ultimately the politicians started to worry about the green vote. This view permeated right down to Local counsellors.

The Mountain men warned the authorities, Local people like myself advocated controlled burning-off to no avail.

No!No! they cried, think of the little animals.
In the big fires at Canberra and the High country all of the little animals were burnt to death, a horrible fate.

Where were the Zealots while this catastrophe was taking place. Possibly hiding under their beds, its only a guess, but appropriate.

Prevention:- I will tell you a short story where prevention not only worked in the face of an out of control Wildfire but worked 100%, a high figure for this type of claim.

In 1962, month of december, fires started in the Healsville area {deliberately lit by a boy} crept relentlessly towards Melbourne over a period of a fortnight. They stopped at Rainbow Valley road Park Orchards.
Why:- Because the wind velocity dropped to zero allowing the firefighters to bring it under control.

How was the figure of 100% achieved in fire prevention practice, saving my Father-in-laws old Baltic pine house, 50ft. long x 18ft wide chook pens, 50 ft. long x 18 ft wide machinery shed, 14ft x 15 ft storage shed. {These Buildings were built with bush timber logs and Galvanised iron. A 12ft x 10 ft weatherboard Bungalow.

Not one building was set alight.

Why?. Because 1000ft long x 500ft wide paddocks in front of the buildings were completely devoid of grass and undergrowth. My father-in-law kept cattle for this purpose on his 55 acre property.

The bush areas burnt fiercely.

When the wind of the fire front went over it sounded like an express train.

My father-in-law, myself and four firefighters were on hand to treat any spot fires. These were small and easily brought under control.

This is my story of prevention, get rid of grass and ground shrubbery and you have a chance. Let the bush run wild and you have no hope.

My father-in-laws' house and associate buildings are still standing.

Prevention:- For the future, I can only speak for my own area, Park Orchards. It is a closely settled area with housing occupying $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$ acre blocks, except for the Northern fringe which is semi-rural. The blocks here are 5 acres or bigger.

To the North and adjacent to Park Orchards is Warrandyte, an antique setting from the gold mining era. It is an interesting Tourist attraction, that and the adjacent National forest, which I must say has had no controlled burning –off of the prolific undergrowth for decades.

Since 1962 the number of houses in Warrandyte and Park Orchards has doubled, the number of trees mixed in with the houses has increased tenfold. This growth combined with the ignorance of the green policy of the fanatics has created a time bomb both for Warrandyte and Park Orchards.

The one constructive suggestion I can make to save Park Orchards from the wild fire, is to provide a major fire-break.

This could be achieved by the following suggestion:-

From Tindalls road to Knees road a distance of approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ of a mile, They are connected by Stintons road a narrow stretch of bitumen. It carries 16,000 cars a day, because it is a short cut to the highway.

If the land to the south of Stintons road was cut up to 1 acre sites, built on and cared for by the owners. This would provide the necessary break in the path of a bush fire and allow the firefighters a chance to bring it under control.

The situation now is there is heavy undergrowth on both sides of Stintons road it is possible the fire chief would stop the trucks from entering the area.

3.

They say a picture is worth a thousand words, not leaves and undergrowth in the background of this picture, note date of picture.

Yours sincerely,

P T O

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION HELD BY THE COMMITTEE

ATTACHMENT TO SUBMISSION NO.496

ATTACHMENT PROVIDED WITH SUBMISSION IS HELD IN THE
COMMITTEE OFFICE