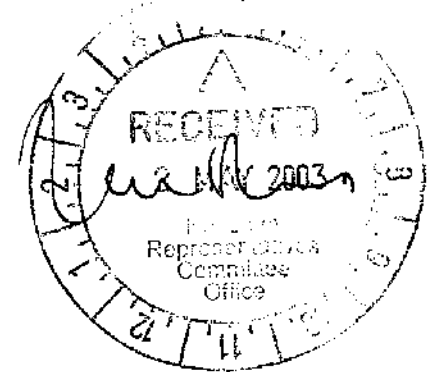


7th April, 2003.

Mr. Gary Mairn M.P. (Eden Monaro),
 Chairman - Parliamentary Enquiry - Bushfire
 Incidence & Impact,
 Standing Committee on Science & Innovation,
 Parliament House,
 CANBERRA.
 A.C.T. 2600.



SUBMISSION.

In the W.W.F. Wentworth Group "Blueprint for a Living Continent"
 Professor Tim Flannery wrote a foreword:-

"When James Cook sailed up the east coast of Australia in 1770, he remarked that the land looked like a gentleman's park. And indeed it was, for those eucalypt groves set in grassy plains were the result of 50,000 years of careful management by Aboriginal people".

The notes of the early explorers and settlers indicate also that the tree density then was not as great as to-day. In those early days "a forest meant an open grassy woodland with widely spaced trees that you could gallop a horse through or ride through with a horse and dray". Artists also depicted this landscape.

Through not understanding this fragile ancient land or living within its ecological dictums, settlers in the past 200 years have vastly changed the landscape and the forests. These changes to the forests are clearly set out by Dr.W.H.Burrows (Q'land Beef Industry Institute, DPI, Rockhampton) in his enclosed Harry Stobbs Memorial Lecture given to the Tropical Grasslands Society in 2002, entitled "Seeing the Wood(land) for the Trees - an Individual Perspective of Woodland Studies (1965-2005)". Please refer to Page 214 Figure 5 of the enclosed Lecture showing the spacing of trees which clearly pre-dated commencement of livestock grazing and the subsequent density of regrowth.

Also enclosed is a copy of burnt out bushland at Mt. Buffalo appearing on Page 7 of The Weekend Australian, 15-16/3/03 which again illustrates the dense regrowth with an old tree in the foreground. Landline in March also showed early paintings of widely spaced trees and regrowth behind a signpost where they interviewed a landholder who quoted the 2003 fires had burnt out twice the area of the 1939 fires.

An explanation of the occurrence of dense regrowth caused by "land management" of white settlers is contained in the attached summary of concepts by soil biologists and botanists entitled "Fire Management and the Effects of Density of Trees on Landscapes Since Settlement."

REDUCTION OF FUEL.

Dr. Phil Cheney of C.S.I.R.O. Forestry Department commented in "The Weekend Australian Magazine" of 22/3/2003 :-

The fuel on the ground is the only thing you can manage. If you want to reduce the intensity of the fire, you have to reduce the amount of fuel that is there producing the heat".

I do not agree with Dr. Cheney that the "fuel on the ground" is the only thing you can manage. Grass fires are not as intense as the bushfires we saw in 2003 - it is the eucalyptus oil in the regrowth that explodes; and it is therefore the dense tree canopy that must be managed:- i.e. the regrowth.

In order to reduce the BUSHFIRE IMPACT, it is submitted that the reduction of fuel be addressed by "thinning the regrowth to waste" (+) in National Parks and rangelands, utilising the vast number of (++) unemployed, migrant and Aboriginal workers (and low-risk prisoners) for this purpose, under trained tree-treatment supervisors, utilising the "waste" for firewood, wood pulp and most important the production of ETHANOL from the lignous cellulose - now being trialled at Nowra by Abaco Research in association with the Tennessee Valley Authority & Greening Australia.

As this form of ETHANOL PRODUCTION is proving cheaper than that from cane or grain, it is suggested that the cropping land be utilised for oilseed production for BIODIESEL which can be produced using a simple catalyst and used in diesel engines without engine modification.

RETENTION OF BIODIVERSITY.

Also enclosed is a Presentation I made to the 2002 S.E.Q. Biodiversity Conference in which I endeavoured to explain how we can restore the landscape to the vegetation that existed before 1788 when LIVING SOIL reduced the amount of litter above the ground quickly and nutritious grasses grew lush and frost resistant due to nitrogen and other elements present in the living soil.

INCENTIVES.

The Steering Committee Report on the public response to the N.R.M. Discussion Paper (Dept. Agriculture, Forestry & Fisheries) saw merit (++) in "The important role of the Green Corps or similar group to support on-ground action"; and "Incentives - interest-free loans to farmers who could borrow money interest free and begin repaying when profits exceeded a certain level" in order to restore the LIVING SOIL in Australia.

(Mrs.) V.D. BURNETT.

TRUSTEE - ESTATE G.C. BURNETT (DECD.) (A/P. QX. 898)

- (+) "Thinning to Waste" - refer P.40 of "Native Forest Management - a Guide to Managing forestry country on property in the Queensland/Murray Darling Basin" by Ross Miller, Native Forest Extension Officer, Queensland Murray/Darling Committee, P.O.Box 6243, Toowoomba. Q. 4350. Such methods ensure mill timber supplies ad infinitum.

ENCLOSURES.

Fire Management & Effects of Density of Trees on Landscape since Settlement - rethinking our land and fire management, and photographic attachments.

Harry Stobbs Memorial Lecture - Tropical Grasslands Society 2002. "Seeing the Wood(land) for the Trees - An Individual Perspective of Woodland Studies 1965-2005." Dr.W.H.Burrows.

Submission - Vegetation Management Policy in Queensland entitled "Queensland. Our Land. Our Future".

PRESENTATION - S.E.Q. Biodiversity Conference 2002 "Soil Biodiversity - the Base of the Pyramid of Life on Earth". Mrs.V.D.Burnett.

PURPOSE.

To date there has been little cohesion or integrated resource management to rectify the degradation that has occurred over the past two hundred years.

The Submission endeavours to address this vital problem. The Submission endeavours to enhance effective use of incentives mechanisms in regional Australia - mechanisms which aid regional population, unemployment etc. other than cash payments. IT TAKES PEOPLE TO HUSBAND THE LAND.