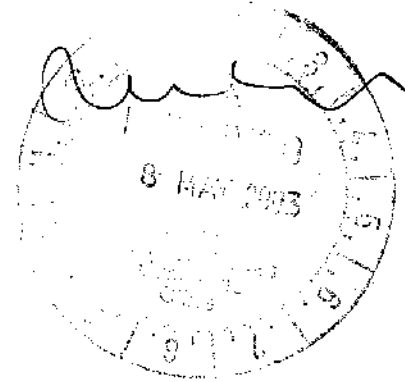


7 May 2003

Committee Secretary
Select Committee on the Recent Australian Bushfires
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600



Sir/Madam

The non-deployment of the massive amount of resources available to the Yarrowlulmla Shires Headquarters Controller and his Licutenants would have contributed to the devastating loss of so many dwellings during the recent ACT fires.

If a few untrained, unequipped residents can save a house, imagine what 20 or 30 tankers and light units could have done.

Resource sharing between agencies in an emergency must apply and jurisdictions become non existent as was the procedure in years past.

The Captains seem to have lost all powers under the present regime, which will ultimately result in a dropping off in volunteers.

The callout system used to be, "If you see smoke go to it" and as a result we never lost a dwelling or had an injury in 25 years. There was never any need for an over-manned over educated room full of dictators simply slowing down the process of "putting out the fire."

The fire was always fought at the fire not back in someone's office – the Captain made the decisions and the controllers backed him up.

The simple facts that Yarrowlulmla Shire Headquarters had at least 48 hours notice (weather reports) that a firestorm would occur, and god knows how many jaunts over the areas in helicopters (local knowledge) massive amounts of manpower and units, and still lives were lost as well as 500 houses, must make them accountable for a percentage of the misery that has been suffered.

I have been told of instances where a fully trained ex member offered his assistance and was told to go home. Where a fully manned unit from out of town was told to go and have tea whilst the fire raged, even from two Captains who said very little was done by Yarrowluma Headquarters.

I couldn't believe the amount of units and manpower that sat idle on Sunday morning 19/01/2003 whilst a state of emergency still remained. I feel the word dictatorship describes this scenario.