

Mr. Leandro Boscuro

12th. May, 2003



Dear Joanna.

I am pleased that the Federal Government is attempting to address the current bushfire crisis and that you are part of the committee, perhaps this may lead to a long needed change in thinking by all levels of government. You may note that I have used the word "current" because the crisis is not over as some noted people would have us believe but there is only a lull in-between crisis periods.

It is my belief that the current situation has been brought about by years of public mis-information.

Australia for thousands of years (dependent on seasonal weather conditions) has had vast areas burnt annually. I have not based this on any scientific data only the presumptions below.

- (1) even before European settlement there were lightning strikes that started bushfires.
- (2) Aborigines had the ability to start campfires but I do not believe that fire weather warnings were issued or that total fire bans were observed.
- (3) I also presume that some aborigines like some in all other races are fascinated with fire and may have been tempted to light a fire to watch it burn.
- (4) I have also read that Aborigines used fire as a hunting and farming tool.

Based on the above presumptions there is a fair chance that fires started regularly. So what happened when these fires started?

- (1) I do not believe that the Aborigines had the infrastructure or the tools for a satisfactory response to stop any significant fire.
- (2) I am quite sure that female kangaroos and wallabies did not eject their young and fill their pouches with water to go firefighting.
- (3) And as there were no roads to stop even slow moving fires. The only barriers were natural, the ocean, rivers, creeks, newly burnt areas and events such as rain and wind changes.

If the above presumptions are feasible then the regular fires would result in significantly lower fuel levels and thus a cooler fire, this allows for an easier escape by fauna and is not as devastating to the flora. The aborigines had fewer possessions which they simply packed up, got out of the way allowed the fire to pass then returned to their site.

The balance was upset approximately 200 years ago when Europeans settled Australia and with them they brought agriculture, stock and immovable houses all of which are neither fire friendly or tolerant.

More recently the environmental lobby has exacerbated the problem by falsely claiming to protect native flora and fauna and prevent pollution. All levels of government have

been submissive when pressured by these groups and have now prevented access to large areas of bush, closed fire trails and restricted hazard reduction.

These policies have been proven wrong as was seen by the devastation of native animals and forests in recent bushfires. Of course bushfires that rage for weeks or months don't cause pollution and the scorched bare earth that's left does not wind up in our creeks and rivers when the next rains come.

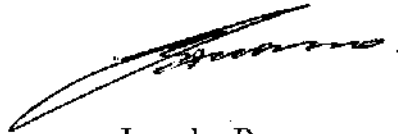
The new scapegoat seems to be "let's stop development in bushfire areas". Most areas actually **become** bushfire areas because the majority of developments occur on cleared areas (ex-farmland) it is the various levels of government that all promote policies of bush corridors, re-vegetation of cleared land and trees at any cost that brings the bushfire threat to the suburbs.

Fires now as thousands of years ago cannot be prevented but their impact can be reduced by reducing fuel levels.

We therefore need to be able to access bush areas so as to restrict the fires ability to easy passage, not the firefighters.

We need to protect our heritage by doing what nature has always done "burn often so as to burn cool".

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Leandro Boscoscuro", with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left and then curves back under the name.

Leandro Boscoscuro