

**LIBERAL PARTY (TAS DIVISION)
RUBICON/ROLAND BRANCH**

29th May 2003

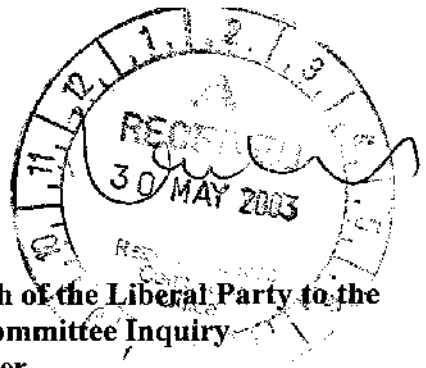
Committee Secretary
House Select Committee on the recent Australian Bushfires
Department of the House of Representatives
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Sir/Madam

The following is a submission from the Rubicon Roland Branch of the Liberal Party to the House of Representatives Select Committee of Inquiry into the recent Bushfires specifically for the Mount Roland area in North West Tasmania.

Yours sincerely

Gillian Appleby
Secretary



**Submission from The Rubicon Roland Branch of the Liberal Party to the
House of Representatives Select Committee Inquiry
into Bushfire Disaster**

At the last branch meeting concerns were raised for the Claude Road/Mt Roland area as this has not had a fire through it for thirty- five years. Claude Road, running parallel to the face of Mt. Roland, has numerous roads running off it, leading towards the face of the mountain, which service around fifty homes in the area. The only way in to these residents is the only way out. Most of these roads are one way but lately some have had passing bays established but vehicles may have to back up to these areas to enable passing. This is not very practical in the panic of a wild fire. Some residents have established turn around areas for tankers.

There are a number of agencies, companies etc with a mutual interest in this Mt Roland area. These include the residents, local council, Rural Fire Brigades, Tasmanian Fire Service, Parks and Wildlife, private forest companies and Forestry Tasmania. All the services have an individual fire management plan with the others mentioned within that plan.

There are established fire breaks along the face of Mt Roland however these must be maintained but this seems to have been neglected recently.

Fire prevention will become a reality when/if all these major stakeholders become coordinated, and implement their fire management plans as one. Education of the residents seems essential after the recent bushfires in Canberra and Sydney (Southern Tasmania 1967 seems too long ago). Pooling of resources and utilising local knowledge would be a great benefit in reduction burning.

Mount Roland is a great haven for wildlife, including wedge- tailed eagles, wallabies, wombats, possums etc and to give these a better chance to survive, patch work burning would be a good method of reducing the fuel.

Given the right conditions, a wild fire could totally devastate all wildlife and vegetation and these may take decades to recover. Just west of the face of Mount Roland is natural bushland along with plantations of pine and eucalypt at all stages of growth including harvesting. A wild fire within these plantations could cost the state millions of dollars. A wild fire in this area would also have an impact on the farming community, including dairying, cropping, beef cattle and deer farming. At present the picturesque beauty of Mount Roland is a great draw card for the tourist industry. This too would suffer greatly.

Fires are costly to all involved - nature, the general public, companies, insurances and Governments. Lets get the Fire Management Plans off the paper and into action as soon as practicable.

Rubicon/Roland Branch of the Liberal Party

May 2003