



House of Representatives
Select Committee on Recent Australian Bushfires
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

To The Committee,
RE: Manjimup Fire Inquiry

I lived at Denbarker in Western Australia for 25 years. I worked for a number of years as a wildflower picker and was an active member of the local fire brigade.

During the 1980's and 90's CALM's burning program was active, and the bush was being burnt every 8 years with the help of local volunteer brigades. Wildflowers were available time and again and were in abundance for 4-5 years at a time, then the bush was reburnt.

An example of how a hot fire can change the face of the bush :-

A flat of sparsa bottlebrush we picked for years, even though the bush was overdue for burning by 4 years. When it was finally burnt, nearly the whole flat was overtaken by Quircifolia.

Recently I was in W.A. and had the opportunity to wander through areas I used to pick flowers in. I noted the absence of boronia and sparsa, and an increase of thick-growing shrubs in their

place. I also noticed strips and whole areas that had become impassible barriers.

CALM in my ~~opion~~ opinion have been good and managing WA forests. Having lived in Tasmania now for the past 9 years, I have seen a different side of forest mangemene. There are no fire-reduction burns in Tasmania only clear-felling.

During summer, as fires devastated areas of Sydney and Canberra, here in Tasmania we kept our fingers crossed. Without fire-reduction burns there is always a high risk of the whole state burning, as happened in the late 1960's.

While in WA, I attended several meetings in Denmark about proposed changes for the Mt Lindsay area. It seemed they want less burning and larger blocks of protected bush. My concern is that most of those who wish such changes, have no ~~re~~ real working knowledge about the areas involved. They seem to have overlooked the impact of not burning larger expanses of bush, or the fire safety of those who still live and work in the area. Feral pigs are another problem many do not understand. Their impact and eradication need thorough assessment and positive action.

In the past changes in forest management may have been good solutions at the time, but perhaps now is a good time to review past practices. Within our collective knowledge is the key to sustainability of our forests.

Sincerely, *Jeff Wilton*