



5-5-2003

Committee Secretary,  
House Select Committee  
Australian Bushfires

Dear Sir,

I am disgusted with the way the Mt Buffalo National Parks North East Victorian Fires were handled.

Is it true that the water bomber had to get written permission from Parks Victoria to bomb the fire on Mt Buffalo National Park.

If so how long did it take to get that permission hours or days.

With all modern equipment & training that fire should have been put out in a matter of hours before dark the day it started.

If it took many hours to get that permission to bomb that fire shouldn't Parks Victoria be responsible for all damage & loss of peoples property & stock & the death of firefighter Cheryl.

There was just too much Red Tape & mismanagement of control of the fire.

Ask the people whose property backed on to the National Parks

There hasn't been near enough controlled burning on the National Park since 1985

Before Christmas 2002 I had to take work men to the top of Mt Buffalo & was horrified to see the amount of leaves & bark on the ground. To my knowledge there is not one true Bushman employed by Parks Vic. That is a very big mistake because no true Bushman would let the Bark & leaves get that bad without doing something about it.

In 1950, One Man, his horse & his dog kept the Buffalo National Park in far better condition than all the people employed now by Parks Vic with a vehicle for every person supplied & then they have to call in volunteers to clear walking tracks. The controlled burning was in chalets & open fires or in the Barbies.

There was too much fuel wasted in Gov. Vehicles travelling up & down the roads doing nothing or taking Gov. employed off the fire front to Myrtleford for meals. Why couldn't meals be taken out to the fire front in 2 or 3 vehicles.

With proper organization meals could have been supplied from many outlets instead of just one

Why should firefighters be given permission to have access to Alcohol when other workers have to be zero Tolerance. No random breath tests on firefighters as is done on Road users.

We need better Firefighting Management.

I believe C.F.A. should have Total Control of any fires in the country & they don't need Govern. Employed people to interfere. C.F.A are country people & know what has to be done correctly.

The C.F.A are Volunteers (not paid) as Govern. Employed out there lining their pockets. The Volunteers are out there to do a job & get it done as quick as possible.

It is a very well known fact that the Gov. Employed won't hurry to put a fire out because the longer it goes the more money they get. This has been going on for many many years & will continue until some one does something about it.

That is why I say give C.F.A Total control of Firefighting in all Victoria.

If you don't believe me get a copy of Gov. Employees pay slips from 8-1-2003 to 20-2-2003 who were supposed to be fighting fires.

There were too many Units sitting round waiting for instructions or were sent to areas where there no fires & had to sit there for up to 5 days without seeing any fire. They were volunteers.

-we need volunteers always but with all the Red Tape & Stand over Tactics of the Govern. employed people we are not going to get volunteers if we don't change these conditions because volunteers don't get paid & Gov. employed live their pockets.

There were too many trucks sitting on roads watching the hills burn instead of getting in & putting the fires out.

If a farmer asked one of these trucks for help to save his property he was told "we are watching it", which they did.

Some volunteers who came for 1 week would not come back a second ~~the~~ time because of the Red Tape & mismanagement

The Gov. employed said "this is our fire" & would not do anything outside bush area & the CFA were told by Owens Control that they must not touch anything in the forest, even if it was a spot fire

One instance of terrible waste of Gov. employ was late firefighting rates with 12 men raced to a spot fire & when they got there not one had any water. What a good job done.  $\overline{=}$   $\underline{=}$

Another good display — 1 Fire Truck up Bungo Ridge with fire very close & the pump

would not work. A mechanic sent to fix it. He got to road leading to Bungo Ridge & could not go up that road without permission from Melbourne Head Office which took 1 hr to get, then had to have an escort vehicle & when he got to the unit no wonder the pump wouldn't work there was no water in the tanker. Whose fault would it have been if those men had been killed,

I have kept many letters written to papers over the fire period & many of them have the same thinking as myself.

Do hope I have given you some ideas but please make 1 body total control of fire fighting & not one that is out there to line its own pockets at the Taxpayers expense

yours Respectfully.

Thelma J Dennis