

**Submission No.18****Newsome, Silvana (REPS)**

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**From:** michael sobb [sobb@idx.com.au]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, 15 April 2003 11:08 PM  
**To:** Committee, Bushfires (REPS)  
**Subject:** Select Committee on Australian Bushfires

New South Wales has had an increasing number of devastating bush fires when one would expect there to be less.

Having regard to the clearing and urbanization which has taken place and the increase in technology including hazard reduction, one expects that fewer fires will occur and that those that do will be readily controlled.

There have been seven separate inquiries or reports into bush fires in NSW since 1994 but what has been achieved. All types of excuses are put forward to prevent the implementation of the obvious strategy of fuel reduction. These include the protection of flora and fauna (which are totally destroyed by the bush fires anyway), the alleged environmental damaged caused by building and maintaining adequate access roads ( no access roads also means the community cannot enjoy the bush, so why is it being preserved), the prohibition on logging (when selective logging encourages new growth which absorbs more carbon dioxide than old growth), the effect on rivers etc (even though bush fires create pollution and silt which kill the fish anyway).

It is tragic that the environmentalists and green groups do not produce valid scientific evidence for their claims but continue to have such sway on the decision makers. It is worth noting that Western Australia has not experience the same level of bush fires as NSW and Victoria. It is no coincidence that in that state, fuel reduction is a standard practice and follows a regular cycle yet they have not had the environmental damage which is alleged to occur if such measures are adopted.

Although it may be nice to leave the bush in its untouched and pristine condition, this is inappropriate. We are already altering the nature of the human person by gene manipulation – a much more significant culling - yet this appears to be accepted. Why can we not perform a slight manipulation on our bush for both its benefit and ours? The present attitude implies plants are of a higher order than humans yet humans make the decisions concerning both plants and humans. Who is really in control then?

Please consider a rational and scientific approach to this issue rather than be swayed by feel good arguments which cannot be substantiated with valid justification. Those who suffer as a result of the fires have feeling which really matter.

Michael Sobb