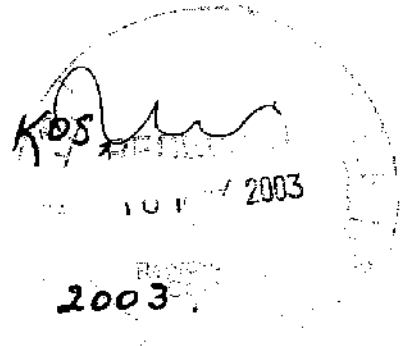


FIRST PAGE OF TWO PAGES

OTTAVIO KOS



FAX: (02) 6277-4424

8 MAY 2003

Committee Secretary,  
Select Committee on Bushfires,  
Parliament House,  
Canberra, ACT, 2600.

Submission No.195

Dear Sir,

RE - BUSHFIRE PREVENTION

I'm writing in the hope that your inquiry into what must be done across Australia to minimise future bushfire risks won't be another whitewash — as government reports and inquiries so frequently are.

What is to be done?

Firstly, take a look at Western Australia. W.A. has not suffered a major forest wildfire for over 40 years. Why? Because of programmed burning of forests every 5 or 6 years, meaning that over 15 per cent of all the state's forests are burned every year — i.e. hazard-reduction burning.

Secondly, look at where the January 2003 fires began. The bushfires began in national parks in NSW, before scorching across the ACT border into Canberra itself, and into Victoria. Why did the fires begin and gain intensity in NSW? Because of insufficient hazard-reduction burning. Lack of hazard-reduction burning leads to over the top maximum fuel loads in

national parks and state forests, and so replacing the inevitable, regular, small bushfires with large, infrequent but high intensity fires.

Thirdly, to reduce the impact of (inevitable) bushfires permit timber harvesting and cattle grazing in national parks and state forests. To exclude timber harvesting is to ensure the deterioration of fire tracks and emergency access roads.

Evidence shows that:

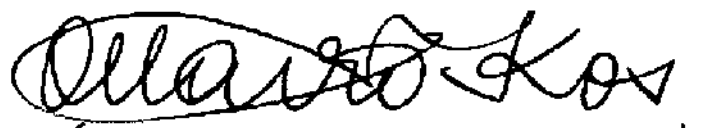
- (1) lack of adequate hazard-reduction burning;
- (2) lack of timber harvesting;
- (3) lack of cattle grazing

leads to high fuel loads, which were principally responsible for the intensity of the January - February 2003 uncontrollable fires, and consequently the destruction of both flora and fauna on a massive scale.

WHAT MUST BE DONE?

To minimise bushfire risk and to ensure bio-diversity in forests and national parks:

1. Conduct regular hazard-reduction burning
2. Permit timber harvesting;
3. Allow cattle grazing.

  
(OTTAVIO KOS)