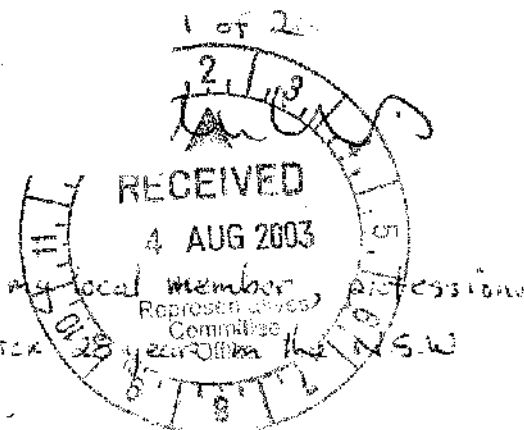


To : Annette Ellis MP
 from : Edwin Lowery.
 subject - Bushfire Inquiry (Federal)



My reason for this report is to place before my local member professional information, Before relocating to the ACT I had spent 25 years in the NSW Bushfire Service, 9 of them as a Deputy Captain.

- ① We should not loose sight of the fact that the ACT has to maintain a Champagne Estate with a Tank water income! Hence some things are neglected
- ② I wonder if many people associated with the inquiry have done any background reading. "Bushfires in Australia" by Luke & McArthur, AGPO while an old text, is a good start. Phill Chainey, CSIRO, has made a large contribution to the science also, and deserves study.
- ③ It is most upsetting that the large body of published information does not seem to be included or incorporated into Building Codes, or the requirements of Insurance companies and lending authorities
- ④ During my many visits to the ACT I couldn't help noticing that Total Fire Bans were in force in the surrounding shires in N.S.W but were not declared in the ACT. During January of this year Fire Works were on ~~the~~ sale in the ACT during local Fire-Bans!
- ⑤ A number of myths need refuting. One is that Hazard Reduction will stop a wild fire in its tracks. This is not the case. HR is a method of controlling wild fire. Another myth is professional managers believe that all that is needed is a management degree. No other study or experience is needed. Another myth is that 20 or 30 years experience is only one years experience 20 or 30 times. However professional qualifications are of huge help in running an office, keeping track of paper work and finances!
- ⑥ Hindsight always has 20/20 vision. That is why a careful post-mortem should always be carried out. Not to lay blame, which I fear this enquiry may be, but to prevent the same errors of judgement happening! Some times the problem can over-power the system and the controllers are reacting to the problem, instead of the problem reacting to the controllers inputs.
- ⑦ Regarding Control. A central control system has many advantages, but it

must know his/her span of control! It helps to have the best control tools but item ① cost raises its ugly head again!

- ⑧ It may be enlightening to compare other Shires with a bushland urban interface as to their management of wildfire and fire fighters, and to the equipment and number of fire fighters available to them. This may be resisted by some people in the ACT who believe that being the National Capital invests all their decisions with automatic international best practice. I have also noticed this problem in a few people in NSW. I pray that these people don't get a hearing.
- ⑨ Human stress is often overlooked. It is hoped that the inquiry does nothing to hinder the recovery of the fire fighters who had to face odds that would have destroyed lesser people and that debriefing be continued as critical incident stress can strike long after the event! Trust me I know.
- ⑩ Training is important but it should not be limited to pump and hose drill. While this drill is important in structure fires it limits the fire fighters efforts to the size of the water supply and the length of the hose line. It can be understood however as the ACT Fire Brigade who has the final oversight of Bushfire Fighting ^{as to} why hose & pump drill is important. Dry fire fighting, including mopping up, is also important. This takes loads of time and people skills. (Item ① again!) and tends to be ignored by many, but not all, Urban Fire Officers. It must be understood however that by Jan 18 it was too late for Dry fire fighting skills

regards

Edwin Jones 20-07-2003.

I am willing to answer any of your questions if necessary.
I can be located at

and contacted on