

JILLIBY

Merino Stud



Committee Secretary
House Select Committee on the recent Australian Bushfires
Dept of House of Representatives
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Submission No.232

Dear Sir/Madam

Build up of combustible fuel over 30 years of 'do nothing' Park mismanagement has resulted in a changed ecology of most of the Kosciusko National Park and Private Lands that was ravaged by wildfire.

This fire was predicted and definitely preventable.

The exclusion of grazing stock as a method of hazard reduction took place with the closure of Snow Leases in 1969 and Permissive Occupancies in 1975.

Spasmodic attempts were made to burn parts of the Park as a hazard reduction. These attempts resulting mostly in wildfires.

The last attempt was in 1981 with the fires having to be put out at great expense.

Our family had a Snow Lease, B 11 situated below Tantangara Dam Wall, semi open country and easily managed with autumn burning being a standard practice as was undertaken with most Leases. Today this 'Lease' is impeniterable and a fire hazard.

The fire at Jagungal Mountain burnt for days unattended before fire trails were cleared and culverts put in to allow machinery to get to the ever-spreading fire. This lack of foresight allowed the fire to have a front too great to handle and it swept into SNOWY PLAIN on 21 January 2003. There were no preventative measures in place to stop this fire... no firebreak put in our block and neighbours were left to the inevitable destruction. In our block Portion 26 Gungarlin 90% of 1450 acres was obliterated. One neighbour Portions 33 & 34 Gungarlin 99% gone and 80% of another neighbour Portions 7 & 4 Gungarlin.

The damage to our Block is immense over \$20,000.00 estimated in fence renewal

\$25,000,00 spent on hay to keep the 100 cows & calves displaced alive and an estimate of timber damage has not been attempted. A lot of our block is not recovering. An assessment will be made in the spring of 2003.

From the 1980 's concern was voiced from many individuals and bodies that the Park Management was on the wrong track...all mentioned a disaster to occur.

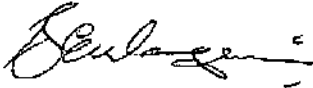
*Published 1986... 'A Receipt For Disaster' by Max Leitch.
'A Look at the Park after 20 Years of Closure to Grazing Stock' compiled in 1989 by
Students from University of Western Sydney.
Report on the Condition of Kosciusko National Park etc by RW Condon
B.ScAgr.,F.A.I.A.S published 1989.*

*Even Dr G Edgar O.B.E. D.v.Sc.,A.R.C.V.S., who's recommendations effectively shut the
Park from grazing in 1969 could see stock to be used as a tool to control plant growth
(Recommendation 10 in his report) This recommendation has never been implemented.*

*I am available for any assistance regarding more explanation, in-depth consultation at
your convenience.*

*I came to Cooma in 1963 and have been associated with the Mountains ever since. I
have had a Snow Lease B11 and a Permissive Occupancy R9. I had a Trail Riding
License in the 1960's and held a Wild Horse Capture License in the Klandra area in the
1960's and have occupied Portion 26 Gungahlin 1450 acres since 1995.*

Yours faithfully



Robert Maguire