



PO Box 6023 Malabar 2036
Ph 02 9311 2334
pjrhino@yahoo.com
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/malabar>
5-5-2003

Committee Secretary
Select Committee on the Recent Australian Bushfires
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

Dear Committee Secretary,

Friends of Malabar Headland (FoMH) is a community based group formed in early 2000 to help protect the natural and cultural heritage of the Malabar Headland. The Headland lies between Malabar and Maroubra beaches in the Eastern Suburbs of Sydney, NSW, and is owned by the Commonwealth Government.

The Malabar Headland contains the largest area of native bush left in the Eastern Suburbs of Sydney, including the largest area of high quality Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub (ESBS) listed as an endangered ecological plant community by both Commonwealth and State Governments.

The Eastern and Western sections of the Headland are widely and highly valued for the quality and biodiversity of their vegetation and bird life. The Western Section is close to medium density housing, and offers a spectacular outlook from atop an escarpment. The Eastern Section has stunning rock formations and coastal scenery, extensive World War II military structures, and has great potential to add a spectacular and popular extension to the coastal walkways that currently contribute to community health and enjoyment between Bondi and Maroubra Beaches.

FoMH has seen negligible evidence of appropriate attention by the Commonwealth administration to the threat of fire to lives, property and biodiversity on and near the Malabar Headland. FoMH is concerned that the Commonwealth has blocked attempts to rezone some of the remnant vegetation to "National Park proposed", and might have ambitions to dangerously squeeze more medium density residential property into close proximity to an endangered ESBS plant community.

A draft Eastern Suburbs Bushfire Management Plan, prepared pursuant to S53 of the (NSW) Rural Fires Act 1997, and exhibited in June 2002, failed to identify who was responsible for fire management planning and action on Malabar Headland, despite the Headland being identified as "Major" fire risk, despite it containing the largest tract of remnant vegetation in the Eastern Suburbs district (outside of adjoining national parks), and despite it being much more significant than many tiny tracts of bush mentioned in the draft plan.

A copy of the FoMH submission of 28 July 2002 to the Eastern Suburbs District Bush Fire Management Committee, mentioning (S.2) lack of evidence of consultation with the Commonwealth, is attached for the Committee's information, as is a response of 3 October



PO Box 6023 Malabar 2036
Ph 02 9311 2334
pjrhino@yahoo.com
<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/malabar>

Senator The Hon Eric Abetz
Special Minister of State
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

19 March 2003

Subject: Bushfire management on Malabar Headland

Dear Senator Abetz,

Friends of Malabar Headland (FoMH) are a volunteer community organisation actively pursuing conservation of Malabar Headland.

We write to alert you to community concerns at the evident lack of adequate fire management planning for the Commonwealth administered land within "Malabar Headland". Malabar Headland is listed on the Register of the National Estate under the heading "Long Bay". It includes the Anzac Rifle Range, and is bounded by the Pacific Ocean, Long Bay, Cromwell Park and Pioneer Park (Malabar, NSW), and properties fronting Broome Street and its side streets, Arthur Byrne Reserve (Maroubra, NSW), and Maroubra Beach.

Fire management planning for the Commonwealth administered land is an important issue because:

- neighbouring residents are concerned (as drawn to attention in an article "Fire hazard lurks in scrub", Southern Courier 23/4/02) and it is feared that some residents may inappropriately take matters into their own hands.
- the land includes high quality bush, comprising 340 indigenous species (including the largest remnant of the endangered ecological plant community "Eastern Suburbs Banksia Scrub"), and attracts 199 species of birds. Community surveys show both bush and birds to be treasured by many visitors.
- there is no evidence of adequate bushfire management planning for Malabar Headland, despite bushfire management planning throughout most of NSW (an Eastern Suburbs District Bushfire Management Plan, exhibited in June 2002, identified the Headland as "Major" fire risk, but failed to nominate any authority for fire management planning, despite it being the most significant bushland in its District).
- an officer of the NSW Fire Brigade has, in discussion with our members, indicated access for fire fighting to be "unsatisfactory" and "degraded".

We are especially concerned that we have found no evidence of open and adequate fire management planning for the headland. Particular planning issues that appear neglected include:

- adequate access and complimentary security measures.
- encouragement of fire preparation by adjacent property owners and residents.
- expert consideration of possible needs for hazard reduction/controlled burning (to protect bio-diversity, lives and property).
- mobilisation of bush fire fighting services.